Soil Health is the Goal!
Integrated Conservation Cropping Systems is the Right System

Soil Health = Conservation Cropping Systems
No (NEVER)-Till / Strip-Till + Cover Crops and Crop Rotations + Precision Nutrient and Pest Management + Buffers

KEY POINTS
- Soil health addresses multiple priority resource issues
- NRCS has a focused message to farmers, the public, and employees
- Farmers perceive changes to their current management as RISK that impedes adoption

High Quality technical assistance, education, and planning directly to the farmer is essential = NRCS is the key agency capable of helping farmers achieve soil health and the associated benefits

WHY FARMERS WANT HEALTHY SOILS:
- Decreased inputs (diesel, time, labor, nutrients, pesticides)
- Increased Soil Health
  - Organic matter = carbon
  - Reduced compaction
  - Nutrient sequestration and cycling (less inputs)
  - Increased water holding capacity and infiltration
  - Structural stability
  - Yield protection
  - “Insurance” against extremes in weather, input costs, markets

WHY THE PUBLIC NEEDS HEALTHY SOILS:
- Less energy (irrigation, nutrients, pesticides) and fuel needs
- Water quality (reduces nutrient and sediment loading)
- Air quality (reduces sediment, carbon, and nitrous oxide emissions)
- Ensures a stable, sustainable, secure, healthy domestic food source
- Increased infiltration = reduced runoff = reduced flooding AND drought protection
- Wildlife habitats

WHY USDA/NRCS IS FOCUSING ON SOIL HEALTH
- Healthy soils address multiple resource concerns across the nation
- Soil Health ensures relevance and confidence in NRCS from all of agriculture
- Farmers see that conservation makes sense and money
- Low technical and financial assistance needs
- Less need for expensive, high technical assistance practices (structures, waterways, etc.)
- Applicable coast to coast, north to south; Large/small; traditional/organic; beginning/limited

RESULTS GET ON THE GROUND

Helping People Help the Land
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