

Conservation Success Profile

Fuhriman Farms

Conservation Stewardship Program

Good land stewardship has kept Fuhriman Farms land productive for over a hundred years. Homesteaded around the turn of the 20th century, the southeastern Idaho dry-land farm sits at an elevation of 5,000 feet. The average rainfall is 14 inches a year, mostly coming in the winter.



Scott Fuhriman, left, and District Conservationist Laren Nalder
basins to reduce erosion potential.

Scott Fuhriman, great-grandson of the original homesteader, works to keep the land productive for the next generation. He grows winter and spring wheat with alfalfa and sainfoin in the rotation. There is little visible erosion, the soil tilth is good, the soil fertility is good, and the land is weed free. As a good land steward Fuhriman had already incorporated practices to conserve his resources.

“On a dry farm, rainfall and elevation are limiting factors” explained Fuhriman. Incorporating resource conserving practices helps maximize the little precipitation that falls. Mulch-tilling increases organic material in the soil which helps retain soil moisture, especially important in fallow fields prepared for fall seeding. The stubble also reduces potential wind erosion.

Even with so little precipitation, erosion can be a problem in this area. Fuhriman installed terraces and sediment control

Following a nutrient management plan to ensure effective and efficient nutrient placement, Fuhriman takes soil samples to know where to apply specific nutrients. He also tracks herbicide and pesticide applications as part of his pest management plan, and finds he uses fewer chemicals with mulch-till.

When Fuhriman learned about the Conservation Stewardship Program, he contacted the local NRCS office to find out more and was one of the first in the county to sign up. He thought the program would benefit the long-term productivity of the farm and recompense the family’s conscientious efforts to take care of the land.

CSP gave Fuhriman the incentive to change a few things for the better. He is planting deep-rooted safflower to help break up the soil’s hard pan layer with roots instead of using machinery. To reduce chemicals in the air, Fuhriman is changing a few things on his spray rig: adding nozzles that spray larger droplets and lowering boom to get the chemicals closer to their target. Wildlife that find refuge in his fields will benefit too - he’ll be harvesting hay in a pattern that allows wildlife to escape.

Fuhriman gives credit to Laren Nalder, District Conservationist in the Malad office “Laren’s thoughtful suggestions will help ensure my farm is sustainable into the future.”

Would his great-grandfather approve of the way things are now? Scott Fuhriman thinks he would be happy with the way they take care of the ground he worked so hard to break up.

Contract Snapshot

Previous On-Farm Conservation Practices:

- Using a mulch–tillage system to reduce erosion & retain soil moisture
- Terracing to control soil erosion
- Soil sampling to enable efficient nutrient application
- Tracking herbicide and pesticide applications

Practices Added to Enhance Conservation:

- Harvesting hay in a pattern that allows wildlife to escape
- Planting deep rooted crops to improve soil quality
- Improving air quality by using large-droplet spray nozzles to reduce spray drift