

THE LEADING EDGE

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A PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO MAXIMIZING YIELD POTENTIAL

Strip-Till: Preparing the Perfect Seedbed and Making Fewer Passes

With all of the benefits that strip-till offers, it is no wonder that growers throughout America's heartland and beyond have adopted its use in their production agriculture operations. Strip-till is performed in the fall or early spring, depending upon location, with the purpose of creating a healthy seedbed. The process involves tilling narrow, residue-free strips in which seeds will be planted into while leaving the rest of the soil untilled and covered with crop residue, which reduces both wind and water soil erosion. The tilled soil formed in a berm, facilitates drainage and invites soil warming, creating the perfect soil conditions for planting. Strip-till not only facilitates the option for precise nutrient placement, it also produces enormous savings in terms of time, equipment and fuel costs.

Strip-till fractures and aerates compacted yield robbing soils. The berm of loose soil warms more quickly in the spring, allowing growers to plant sooner. At the same time, strip-till does not wear down the soil or dry it out like conventional methods. It encourages natural organic matter to build up and boosts the rate of water infiltration for healthier, nutrient-rich soil.

In fact, strip-till may be able to significantly stretch water supplies, as it has been proven that strip-tilled fields absorb water much more quickly and retain it at a considerably higher rate.

Strip-tillage is obviously an excellent alternative to conventional techniques, but starting at harvest is absolutely imperative, and choosing the right way to handle residue makes all the difference. Residue must be sized and properly distributed. It is critical that the combine be equipped with a spreader that will distribute residue evenly across the full width of the header.



Evenly spread residue is the first step to creating perfect strips.

A chopper to size heavier, tougher residue is also needed. The spreader catches the fine chaff that is expelled by the combine and spreads it evenly to prevent a mat-like build up or bunching in the center of the combine. Properly sized and evenly spread residue reduces the workload of the strip-till opener, which results in consistently formed berms.



An added bonus of strip-till is the option of applying fertilizer while building the berm.

Strip-till conserves moisture and warms up the seedbed at the same time.

This places fertilizer in a band directly beneath the grow zone so plants are able to quickly intersect the nutrients for faster growth. Pinpoint placement of the fertilizer assures the maximum utilization by the growing plants and the least chance for loss.



As with any farming operation adequate planning is a key ingredient to it's success, strip till is no different. A comprehensive strip-till plan maximizes yield potential, which can provide a quick return on investment for both equipment and nutrients

Manage residue, place fertilizer and create the following year's seedbed all in one pass.

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