

# Progress to No-Till: Your Guide to a Smooth Transition

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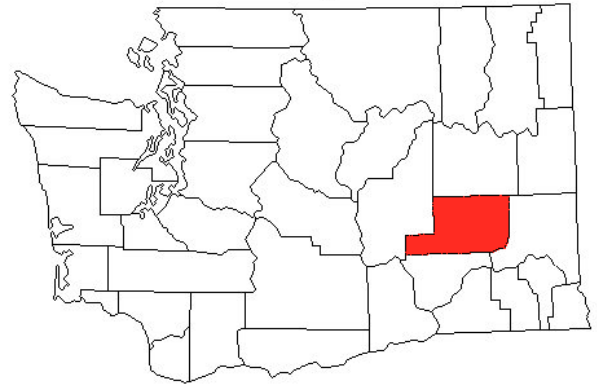
ALEC 631  
Dr. Shackelford

# Progress to No-Till

## Historical Background

### Adams County, Washington

Washington State is a large wheat producing state with 2.25 million acres of wheat harvest in 2014. In 1880 the first small wheat crop was produced by settlers from Germany. By 1904, Ritzville was the largest initial shipping point for wheat in the United States.



#### General Demographics

- 1,925 square miles
- Population: 19,179
- Bachelors degree or higher earned over 25 years of age: 14%
- Major towns:
  - Ritzville population: 1,679
  - Othello population: 7,631

#### Agriculture Demographics

- Number of farms: 713
  - Size of farms: 1,454 acres
- Harvested Cropland
  - 123 farms with 2,000+ acres
  - Totaling 281,201 acres harvest
- Age of Operator (Average age= 62.3)
  - 35-44 years old: 7
  - 45-64 years old: 39
  - 65 and older: 53
- Years on Present Farm
  - 5-9 years: 11
  - 10 or more years: 85

# Progress to No-Till

## Needs Assessment

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### **What is the problem?**

Wind and water erosion on farmland is reducing the amount of healthy soil available to produce strong crops. In Eastern Washington, wind and water erosion has caused a

A needs assessment is a systematic process to analyze the gaps between what you know and want to know, or what you do or do not want to do. There are many sources that want to encourage farmers to adopt no-till practices to provide a positive impact on the environment. In Washington State, there are government programs like the WIRA 34 initiative; Direct Seeding/No-till grants to cost share with farmers, and also watershed management plans that are created by landowners to protect their waterways. All of these sources contribute to the need that something should be done to help farmers reach the goals and initiatives set. This program will help landowners reach the goals and initiatives set.

### **Why is this important?**

Adams county is a large wheat producing county, with the dry climate, and little rainfall there is an increase in the soil erosion. Farmers need to keep the dirt where it should be and the land in suitable conditions for producing wheat sustainably. We don't want to continue to degrade the environment, we need to do our best to get back the good nutrients and organisms. This can all be done through no-till.

# Progress to No-Till

## Program Marketing

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### **Marketing**

I plan to use social media, newspaper ads, radio, and word of mouth to provide outreach about the program. Flyers will be spread out throughout main farmer gathering areas around the county. The outreach material will include the basic information about when, where, time, and the purpose. I also plan to use opinion leaders who will not only help to spread the word about the workshop, but they will provide a positive light showing the public that it can be a beneficial program.

With marketing, my main goal is to reach as many people as I can. The more people know about it, the most possibility of people attending the workshop.

Example of a flyer is attached.

# Progress to No-Till

## Workshop Overview

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**Title:** Progress to No-Till: Your Guide to a Smooth Transition

**Goal:** To address the obstacles farmers face when transitioning to No-Till.

**Overview:** This program will give farmers advice, guidance, and information from researchers, finance experts, loan companies, and local farmers.

**Session Setup:** There will be a series of workshops that include basic information about the transition to no-till. They will be held every Monday for a month, during the late fall or early winter, because that is the time that is typically not as busy for the farmers. They should be held in the mornings because that is when the farmer is ready to go in the morning, plus it can be more difficult for farmers to quit what they are doing during the day to attend a meeting in the middle of the day.

Participants in the program will receive a folder that holds information that will be included for that session. There will be pens and extra paper for the farmers so they can take notes. There will be raffle tickets as well, so some freebies can be given away. These will come from sponsors including chemical companies, conservation districts, etc. Refreshments will also be at each session, these might range from snacks to full catered breakfasts.

The room will have round tables, with no more than 5 chairs at each table. I feel this is important because I want to encourage discussion at the tables. Too many people and some individuals can get lost and over turned by other individuals. I would like discussion between the participants, and with me while conducting the workshop

I would like to encourage the farmers to stand up, get refreshments, etc. but to also be respectful of the speakers and what is going on. I think it's important to ensure respect between the presenters and the participants. As change agents, we have to keep equal sense of respect and understanding.

# Progress to No-Till

## Workshop Overview Cont.

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### **Volunteers**

I will use many different volunteers to conduct this workshop. Volunteers include, researchers to gather all of the scientific and how-to logistics of the program. Bankers and finance people can help put together information about loans and other financial topics to provide to the farmers. Also other farmers who are currently doing no-till will provide testimonial and other real life talk about the transition to no-till. Other conservation organizations can help with the set up and take down, and other aspects of organizing the workshops as well.

### **Committee Groups**

I will use committees to gather information and structure what should be included in each session. This will help alleviate the pressure from me to get things done.

# Progress to No-Till

## Lesson Material

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### **Session 1- Introduction and No-Till 101**

- Purpose and goals of the workshop
- Definition of no-till
- Basic overview: No-till versus Conventional tillage
- Environmental benefits of no-till

### **Session 2- Finances & Economics**

- How to obtain finances to start no-till
- Budgeting your money
- What companies/organizations offer funding

### **Session 3- No-till Equipment & Cropping**

- Drills & Sprayers
- Row spacing, openers, depth control, etc.
- Disease/Insect management
- Types of crops produced

### **Session 4- Cover Crops, Overall Wrap-up & Questions**

- Basic information about Cover Crops and no-till
- Questions & Answers session
- Any information that should be added
- Survey will be provided

\*During each session there will be a panel of experts who can provide answers to questions or give the presentation of information to the participants.

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## Session 1- Introduction and No-till 101

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For the first 10-20 minutes of the session, we will open with introduction and overview of what the participants can expect from the sessions.

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### Welcome!

I'm glad you took the first step towards caring for you land and the environment. With this workshop there will be 4 different session to attend. Each session will cover the main parts to transitioning to no-till. Sessions include:

**Session 1:** Introduction and no-till 101

**Session 2:** Finances & Economics

**Session 3:** No-till Equipment & Cropping

**Session 4:** Cover Crops, Overall Wrap-up & Questions

Everyone should have picked up a packet when they walked in, if you haven't already looked through it you can do so now.

The overall goal of this workshop is to address the obstacles you face when transitioning to no-till. There will be time for questions and open discussion at each session, so you will have opportunity to have any specific questions addressed.

Please feel free to get any food or snacks provided in the back of the room, if you do decide to move around please be respectful of the other people listening to the speaker.

I will now introduce (soils expert) to talk about the definition of no-till, environmental benefits of no-till, and an overview of no-till versus conventional tillage

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\*Sample material of what would be included in this session is attached



# Progress to No-Till

## Evaluation & Communication of Results

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### **Evaluation**

After the program each participant will receive a survey to fill out and turn in. With the evaluation I hope to gain insight on how the program went and what can be improved on. This will help me gauge if we should continue providing the program or I should stop the program. Also, talking with farmers and other people about how the program went will be helpful as well. Long-term effects of the program can be obtained as well in the future.

### **Communication of Results**

Immediate results will be obtained through the survey given to the participants of the workshop. The results will be reported to companies or organizations involved in environmental programs, participants of the program, and also the law makers and individuals in charge of allocating funding to Extension.