

No-till on Brookside Farm

In the 1960s I became interested in No-Till crop production. I started following the work of Harry Young and S.H. Phillips on the no-till in the state of Kentucky. I was impressed and thought it should work here. I bought a no-till planter in 1969 and put it to work. Results were not that great. Some fields did well, some did not. At that time, a weed called Texas fall panicus came on the scene and was very difficult to control. The only burndown at that time was paraquat and limited effect. Problems arose with establishment of Canada thistle, milkweed, dogbane, sow thistle and horse nettle. No-till was abandoned in favor of a chisel plow system.

Once in a while we still did a no-till field just to see if I was missing something. We later eliminated the chisel plow and just a disc harrow once over followed by the disc harrow with a cultipacker. This worked out well and is the system we still use. The other system I was fascinated with was ridge till. Went out to Iowa to visit Ernie Behn and see his farm and bought his book and was impressed with his system. We threw up ridges where we cultivated the corn and I made axle extensions for the combine to match the row spacing. I used this system on a limited acreage for one year. We stayed with the discing as our soil preparation tool.