

No-till and cover crop workshop to be held in Holyoke Feb. 16

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

A “No-till and Cover Crops Part 2” workshop will be held Thursday, Feb. 16, at the Phillips County Event Center in Holyoke.

Registration will begin at 9 a.m. and the workshop will run from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided. There is no registration fee.

The workshop will start with the basics of no-till and cover crops: soil and water. Producers need to understand how water moves through the soil and how water moves out of the soil. Dallas Johannsen from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Scottsbluff, Neb. will explain how soil, roots, tillage and water interact.

Once those attending see how tillage affects how water moves through the soils, then they can recognize how no-till and cover crops fit into farming practices.

No-till cover crops and grazing livestock will be the focus of Mark Watson’s discussion. Watson is the Nebraska notill educator and a long time dryland and irrigated no-till farmer in the Alliance, Neb. area.

The real goal is to add diversity to cropping systems, says Watson. He will look at the economics of producing crops in a no-till system and the flaws with summer fallow. Mark will share the valuable lessons he has learned while using no-till and cover crops.

Bridgeport area irrigated farmer and feeder Kirk Laux has been 100 percent no-till since 2003. He carries a surplus of irrigation water from year to year, even with the lowest allocation in the state. Laux will tell how cover crops and no-till have enabled him to do this. He’ll also share the challenges he has seen to reach this point.

Paul Jasa has been working with no-till since 1978. “If there is a mistake to be made with no-till, I’ve either made it myself or have seen it done,” said Jasa. Jasa will share some of his experiences and explore planting equipment and tillage systems. He will also talk about why

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irrigators should consider using no-till instead of strip-till systems.

Keith Berns and his brother Brian farm 2000-plus acres south of Hastings, Neb. at Bladen, Neb. They have been 100 percent continuous no-till for over 12 years. The Bernses have participated in numerous research projects on cover crops. They have looked closely at cover crop water use and effect on the following crop. Keith will share what they and several of their cooperators in western Kansas and eastern Colorado have learned.

This workshop is sure to stir up some interesting ideas. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.

There is no registration fee, but people do need to reserve a lunch. Call 970-332-3173 ext. 3, 970-854-2812 ext. 3 or e-mail julie.elliott@co.usda.gov by Feb. 9 to save a plate. Late registrations and walk-ins are welcome but will not be guaranteed lunch.

The Yuma County Conservation Districts, Haxtun Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are sponsoring this workshop.

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