



Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring Program

**Using Peer-to-Peer Assistance to Support Successful
Adoption of Continuous No-Till**

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Conservation District

- Development of a mentoring network to supplement and complement agency resources
- Promote use of continuous no-till through active promotion of successful farmer examples
- Provide additional outreach and technical support for complementary program (Park the Plow)

Program Objectives



Project Team

- **Chesapeake Bay Funders Network** –Project funding and consultation
- **No-Till Sluggers** -Experienced No-tillers provide technical support
- **Cooperative Extension in Lebanon County** – Planned and organized field days, provided mentor training, technical oversight and consultation
- **Lebanon County Conservation District** - Coordinated and supported mentoring relationships
- **NRCS** - Provided transition funds through EQIP
- **Capital RC&D** – Program Planning, administration and reporting and Park the Plow funds

Project Results

- **Twelve active mentors “No-till Advisors”**
- **Transition of 3,884 acres** of cropland to continuous no-till in Lebanon County
- **Transition support for 60+ farmers** in the county
- **Recruitment of three times** more participants for Park the Plow than any of the other counties in the seven county project region
- **72% increase in no-till** use in Lebanon County between 2007 and 2010

Elements of Successful Implementation

- Recruitment/Training/Management of mentors all required active involvement of project team
- Measurement and monitoring of progress occurred on quarterly basis using recordkeeping tools, primarily interview based
- Field walks and other events, held on an ongoing basis provided outreach for the program as well as education

Lessons Learned

- Measurement of success/revisions needed
 - Quarterly check-in with mentors
 - Beginning no-tillers survey (written/follow-up phone calls)
 - Mentor survey (phone calls)
- Feedback resulted in more intensive management of mentoring relationships

Continuing Outreach

- “Stop By and Ask Me About...” signage
- Conservation District website
- Established relationships
- Continued opportunity for panel appearances
- Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance use of farmer-to-farmer model

