Environmental Quality Incentive Program
Direct Seeding Tour

Final Report and Survey Results
of 1999 EQIP Education Assistance Activities

Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District
1112 36th Street North, Suite B
Lewiston, Idaho 83501

July 1999

This project funded with EQIP Education assistance funds from the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service.
Table of Contents

I. Introduction ........................................................................................................... 3
II. Overview ............................................................................................................... 4
III. Educational Survey ............................................................................................ 4
IV. Acknowledgements ............................................................................................. 7
V. Summary of 1999 EQIP Education Assistance Provided ..................................... 8
I. Introduction

Local leadership for conservation has been a primary responsibility of conservation districts for over 60 years. The idea of locally led conservation is to build on this experience. Simply put, locally led conservation means involving the entire community in assessing needs, determining priorities, and working together to solve natural resource problems.

Conservation Districts coordinate technical and financial assistance for natural resource problems by working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, other Federal, State and Local agencies, conservation organizations, producer groups, environmental groups, and other local interests. These Districts are governed by a board of locally elected supervisors who take an oath of office to carry out the District’s mission. The District’s supervisors are unpaid officials who dedicate their time to serve the community and its natural resources.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that works primarily in locally identified geographic priority areas where there are significant natural resource concerns such as soil erosion, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, animal waste, and nutrient management and water bodies on the 303(d) list. The program offers financial, technical, and educational assistance to farmers and ranchers to install or implement structural, vegetative, and management conservation practices called for in 5 to 10-year contracts. It is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.
II. Overview

As part of the 1997 Conservation Needs Assessment, erosion control and sustainable agriculture were identified as major resource concerns. The need for direct seeding technology transfer was identified as a result of the locally led conservation process. To address this, the Nez Perce and Latah Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) began developing programs to assist growers in implementing Direct Seeding systems.

As part of their efforts, the Nez Perce SWCD applied for an EQIP educational grant through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). This grant was used to fund a technology transfer tour. A survey was conducted with tour participants to determine if tour goals were met. The results of this survey are described in this report.

The educational proposal includes the following goals:

1.) Increased awareness and better understanding of Direct Seeding Systems.

2.) Technology and information transfer for equipment applications, improved technology, soil quality, and grower experiences in overcoming Direct Seeding System challenges.

The tour was completed on June 16, 1999. Approximately 100 people attended this tour. Each participant completed a tour survey to help the District determine if their goals were met. The survey results are listed on pages 4-6.

III. Educational Survey

Ninety seven surveys were distributed in June 1999. The Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service compiled results and prepared the document. The survey response rate was 52%.

The survey included seven sections:

A. Participant Type
B. Research Needs
C. Direct Seeding Limitations
D. Conservation District Assistance
E. Educational Value of Tour
F. Increased Awareness of System
G. Adoption of System
A. Participant Type

Data on participant type was collected to determine the customer base the surveys represented. Four categories were included on the survey; grower, researcher, agency employee, and industry. The majority of participants were growers. Table 1. summarizes the participant type.

Table 1. Participant Type Data Summary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent of survey responses selecting this category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grower</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Agency</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Research Needs

Participants were asked to list the types of research needed to implement direct seeding. The responses were grouped and are listed in descending order (as per number of responses).

- High residue management
- Develop a longer base of knowledge of successful systems (especially 3-5 year rotations)
- Methods/strategies for direct seeding into high residue crops
- Alternate winter and spring crops
- Seeding dates and seeding depths for different crops
- Rodent, slug, and new pest controls
- Methods for handling high spring moisture
- Equipment modifications to address steep ground
- Cutting costs and reducing risks
- Study 3 and 4 year crop rotations

C. Direct Seeding Limitations

Participants were asked to respond to the question; “On your farm, what is the greatest limitation to implementing direct seeding?” The responses were grouped and are listed below:

- weather - money for drill
- disease - grassy weeds
- financial failure - lack of equipment
- knowledge - residue problems
- lack of chemicals - limited rotation crops
- low crop prices
D. Conservation District Assistance

Participants were asked how the Conservation District could assist them in implementing direct seeding on their farm. The responses are listed below:

- programs for new and used equipment
- tours
- education
- more farmer to farmer networking
- does a good job already
- rented drill
- set-up a demonstration farm

E. Educational Value of Tour

Participants were asked if the tour was educational.

100% of the responses were “yes”

F. Increased Awareness of Direct Seeding Systems

Participants were asked if new ideas were presented to them during the tour.

88% responded “yes”
12% responded “no”

G. Adoption of System

Participants were asked if they would use direct seeding on their farm.

67% responded “yes”
8% responded “no”
25% of the respondents were not growers
V. Acknowledgements

The Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District would like to express its gratitude to all of the organizers, sponsors and participants that contributed to the success of the Direct Seeding Tour:

Barry Beaudion - Monsanto
Doug Deschamp - Novartis
Larry Smith - U of I Cooperative Extension Service
Roger Veseth - STEEP
USDA-NRCS Moscow and Lewiston Field Offices
USDA-FSA Nez Perce County Field Office
Latah Soil and Water Conservation District
Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District
Ann Kennedy - USDA-ARS
Dave Huggins - USDA-ARS
Art Schulteis - Grower
Russ Zenner - Grower
Mark Zenner - Grower
Pam Rogers - Nez Perce SWCD Volunteer
Summary of 1999 EQIP Education Assistance Provided

Project Title - Direct Seeding Tour

Name of Conservation District - Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District

Description of action completed:

A technology transfer tour was completed on June 16, 1999.

Number of EQIP participants reached (include information on outreach efforts to nontraditional/underserved customers):

97 participants were reached.

Description of direct relationship between action completed and EQIP high priority resource problem.

Adoption of direct seeding systems will reduce erosion and sedimentation. This reduction will result in improved water quality because of the reduction of sediment and nutrients delivered to streams.
For Additional Information:

Nez Perce Soil and Water Conservation District
1112 36th Street North
Lewiston, Idaho 83501

(208) 746-9886 extension 3

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at 202/720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a compliant of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326 W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202/720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.