

EXPANDING WEB / E-MAIL ACCESS TO PNW DIRECT SEED CROPPING SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY

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The Internet and E-mail are rapidly becoming major communication and technology access tools for PNW Ag support personnel and growers. Most county offices of cooperative extension, conservation districts, USDA-NRCS, Ag service industries, and an increasing number of growers in the Pacific Northwest have Internet / E-mail access. A 2001 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service study showed that an average of 58% of PNW growers have Internet / E-mail access, up dramatically from 18% in 1997 and 40% in 1999. Along with the growth in Internet and E-mail use, Northwest growers are increasingly moving towards direct seeding and more intensive cropping systems to improve production efficiency and profitability, cropland productivity, and environmental protection.

A PNW Web site and PNW Direct Seed List E-Mail Server (based at the Web site) are helping meet this expanding PNW demand for computer access to direct seed cropping systems technology. The Web site (<http://pnwsteep.wsu.edu>) "PNW Conservation Tillage Systems Technology Source" is part of an educational effort under the STEEP (Solutions To Environmental and Economic Problems) research and educational program on conservation tillage systems in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. It is also part of the educational efforts under the Columbia Plateau Wind Erosion / Air Quality Project and other related programs on conservation cropping systems technologies.

The Web site contains a wealth of technology resources and communication links. Averaging about 200 hits per day in 2001, the Web site is becoming an increasingly important information source. This Web site received a Certificate of Excellence in Web Pages in the 2000 American Society of Agronomy Educational Materials Awards Program.

Recent Web Site Redesign – An extensive redesign of the Web site is nearing completion.... though Web sites are never "done," because there are continual additions and revisions to keep them up to date. The Web site index has been reorganized at the top left of each linked page to help improve navigation within the site. Each sub-page now contains a listing of linked content items in "outline form" on the index, making it easy to view and go to specific components of the sub-pages.

Web Site Features / Updates

The following are brief descriptions of some of the major Web site's 14 major index features and recent design innovations.

PNW Conservation Tillage Update newsletters -- This newsletter provides a timely and effective technology transfer tool for STEEP and related research projects. Update issues highlight new research technologies, information resources and upcoming events related to direct seed cropping systems. The current mailing list is over 2,800, including primarily PNW producers (about 1,950), county Extension agents, Conservation Districts, NRCS staff, and Ag service industry, Ag media and other support personnel. Issues have also been posted on the Web site since 1995 (click on PNW Update Newsletter) to greatly expand access to the newsletters beyond the mailing list. E-mail / Web subscription options for the Update will be available soon.

PNW Conservation Tillage Handbook Series -- This PNW Extension Handbook currently containing 166 Handbook Series publications and they are now all available on the Web site (click on PNW Tillage Handbook). These publications summarize the latest research technologies from the PNW STEEP conservation tillage systems research program and other related PNW research efforts from the perspective of how NW growers can incorporate the new technologies into their management systems. Print copies of the new Handbook Series are distributed through the PNW Conservation Tillage Update newsletter.

Northwest Direct Seed Cropping Systems Conferences -- A Web site Conference page (click on Direct Seed Conferences) currently allows you to choose from the six Conference years (1998 through 2003). It is utilized extensively in publicizing the Conferences and providing access later to the proceedings and video information. In advance of the Conferences, the sponsorship / trade show prospectus, Conference pre-registration, and poster exhibition registration, sections now include registration templates that can be completed online, printed and mailed, or submitted directly via e-mail.

Direct Seed Resource Directories -- Two editions are currently available on the Web site (click on Resource Directories), and the third is in progress. They describe and provide access to information on more than 42 publications, videos, and other Web sites with additional information on direct seed cropping systems.

Northwest Direct Seed Grower Case Study Series -- A series of 16 full-color, 8-page publications in this PNW Extension bulletin series were completed from 1999 through 2001 with 3,000 print copies of each publication. The goal of the NW Direct Seed Case Study series was to facilitate grower-to-grower learning to enhance Northwest grower adaptation of direct seeding through increased access to the knowledge and experiences of these innovative growers. The Case Studies are all accessible on the PNW Web site (click on Grower Case Studies), as PDF files that can be viewed and printed as they look in published form. The first item on Case Study Series Web page is a "Series Overview," which briefly describes the format of the publications, and identifies the growers, farm locations, precipitation zones and common crop rotations.

PNW Direct Seed E-mail / Web List Server -- This Web-based List Server (click on Direct Seed List Server) offers an exciting communications link on new information resources, events,

research results, technology innovations and experiences in the Inland Northwest. Begin with the brief overview and procedures on how to use the List Server. Note that for your e-mail privacy, the list server member list is not be accessible to List Server participants. Also, to prevent e-mail computer viruses from being sent to all participants, e-mails with attached files have now been blocked from the List Server. List Server messages are sent and received by e-mail and are also stored on the List Server Web site for later reference, and for access by those added to the List Server over time. When the List Server was established in late 1999, the initial address list included about 230 university and USDA-ARS researchers, extension specialists, county/area Ag extension educators, conservation districts, USDA-NRCS staff, PNW grower organizations, Ag industries representatives, and growers from across the dryland cropping areas of the Inland Northwest. From this initial base network, the List Server has been expanding to over 460 with interested growers and other Ag support personnel from across the region. More than 150 messages have been sent on the List Server. You can join the List Server from the Web site. You can also send your request to Roger Veseth, WSU / UI Extension Conservation Tillage Specialist and List Server administrator, 208-885-6386, e-mail (rveseth@uidaho.edu), and you will be sent an e-mail confirmation and more information on how to use the List Server.

PNW STEEP Annual Research Reports -- Annual reports for the PNW STEEP conservation tillage systems research program in Idaho, Oregon and Washington for 1998 through 2001 are accessible on the PNW Web site (click on STEEP Research Reports). Each report provides an annual summary of the results and accomplishments of about 20 STEEP projects. This Web section also includes a brief overview of the STEEP research program involving WSU, OSU, UI and USDA-ARS. It also features listings of new STEEP projects funded in 2001 and 2002, with project titles, researchers and project objectives.

NW Columbia Plateau Wind Erosion / Air Quality Project – Cropland wind erosion has long been a concern to growers in the low precipitation regions under dryland cropping and irrigation in the Pacific Northwest. This Web page (click on Wind Erosion / Air Quality) provides an overview of this comprehensive research and educational project involving a number of land grant universities and federal and state agencies in the region. The project includes research on defining and managing cropland sources of dust and particulate. A 72-page color publication titled “Farming with the Wind – Best Management Practices for Controlling Wind Erosion and Air Quality on Columbia Plateau Croplands” is being added to this Web page. The WSU Extension publication (MISC0208) provides a review of the best management practices for controlling agricultural wind erosion on the Columbia Plateau cropland, with highlights of research results from the Columbia Plateau Wind Erosion / Air Quality Project. For ease of computer access, this publication is being divided into separate PDF files by chapters that are linked to a Table of Contents.

PNW On-Farm Testing – This Web section (click on On-Farm Testing) contains PNW publications on on-farm testing methodologies and related resources to help provide growers and Ag advisers with practical approaches on how the more accurately evaluate the performance of new management strategies, equipment and products for conservation farming systems in the field. The results of over 250 on-farm trials in the region are available through several annual reports from a multi-year PNW STEEP on-farm testing project. A new, simple computer software program called “AGSTATS02” is nearing completion for statistical analysis of the on-

farm trial results. This computer software, being developed through a STEEP project, should be available from this Web site later in 2002.

Web Resource Links -- A compilation of PNW, national and international Web sites with new technology resources for direct seed cropping systems is available on the Web site (click on Resource Links). Links are divided into four geographic categories: Pacific Northwest; Northern Great Plains/Canadian Prairie Provinces; U.S. – National; and International. Subdivision within each of those categories typically include: Research and Extension, Grower Organizations, and Ag Support Industries and Organizations. The current edition of Resource Links is Version 3 – February 2002. This listing is continually being expanded and updated. For everyone’s benefit, Web site users are encouraged to submit links to other Web sites related to direct seed cropping systems.

Calendar of Events -- This Web page (click on Coming Events) provides an ongoing listing of conferences, field days, tours and other events related to conservation tillage systems in the Northwest, as well as applicable national and international events. Detailed descriptions and agendas of seasonal field days and tours related to direct seed cropping systems in the PNW are also posted.

Search Engine -- This new search engine (click on Search Our Site) allows extensive key-word searches of the entire Web site.

PNW Direct Seed Association -- There is a link to the home page of this Web site (click on Direct Seed Association) for the Web site of this new Pacific Northwest Direct Seed (grower) Association that is an increasingly important partner in research and educational efforts on direct seed cropping systems.

Retooling Agriculture PNW Publication -- This December 2001 PNW Extension bulletin (PNW553) is a full-color 42-page publication that describes the breadth and depth of public and private research and extension programs to facilitate the transition to direct-seed cropping in the dryland farming areas of the region. Free copies of the publication are available through PNW County Extension offices and you can also access it through this PNW Web site at (click on Retooling Agriculture at the bottom of the home page). To view and print the PDF file (as you see it in print), click on the colored line “Agriculture/Conservation Tillage Category on the above Web page that is linked to the WSU Extension Bulletin’s Web site. Then scroll down through the publication list to the publication title “Retooling Agriculture ...” and click on PDF file below the title.

Your Suggestions Are Welcome!

Let us know if you have any suggestions to help expand this Web site to better serve NW growers and Ag support personnel in developing successful direct seed cropping systems. Send them to Roger Veseth, e-mail (rveseth@uidaho.edu) or phone 208-885-6386.