

IMPACT



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Expanding Internet/E-mail Access to PNW Direct Seed Cropping Systems Technology

The Situation

The Internet and E-mail are rapidly becoming major communications and technology access tools for Pacific Northwest 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 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. Northwest growers also are increasingly moving towards direct seeding and more intensive cropping systems to improve production efficiency and profitability, cropland productivity, and environmental protection.

Our Response

Efforts to increase computer technology access to direct seed cropping systems technology has focused on two areas: 1) PNW Web site; and 2) PNW Direct Seed E-mail / web list server. Both can provide rapid access to up-to-date technologies and information resources on direct seed systems.

Program Outcomes

Internet Web Site - PNW Conservation Tillage Systems Technology Source

This Web site (<http://pnwsteeep.wsu.edu>) initiated in 1997, contains a Web site index of 13 resource topics. The Web site was extensively redesigned in

2000 with the site index included at the top of each section to help improve navigation within the site. The following are some Web site highlights:

PNW Conservation Tillage Handbook Series—The entire Handbook Series of PNW Extension publications (a total of 165 through 2001) is on the Web site. 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 grower can incorporate the new technologies into their management systems.

PNW Conservation Tillage Update newsletters—On-line issues now greatly expand access to the newsletters beyond the current PNW mailing list of over 2,800. Update issues distribute new PNW Conservation Tillage Handbook Series publications and a variety of articles on other resources and coming events.

Northwest Direct Seed Cropping Systems Conferences—A Web site Conference page currently allows you to choose from all the Conference years (1998 through 2002). It is utilized extensively in publicizing the Conferences and providing access later to the proceedings and video information. The sponsorship prospectus, Conference pre-registration and poster exhibition registration sections include registration templates that can be completed online, printed and mailed, or submitted directly via e-mail.

Northwest Direct Seed Case Study Series—A series of 16 new NW Direct Seed Case Studies that document experiences of long-term direct seed growers in the Northwest were published as PNW Extension bulletins and are accessible on the Web site as PDF files (view and print in publication format). This series was developed to enhance Northwest grower adaptation of direct seeding through increased access to the knowledge and experiences of these innovative growers.

PNW Direct Seed E-mail/Web List Server—This List Server (see more details below) offers an exciting communications link on new information resources, events, research results, technology innovations and experiences in the Inland Northwest. Messages are sent by e-mail and also stored on the List Server Web.

Direct Seed Resource Directories—Two editions currently provide in-depth listing of publications, videos and other educational resources on direct seed cropping systems.

PNW STEEP Annual Research Reports—Annual reports for the PNW STEEP conservation tillage systems research program and other related research publications are added to the Web site to provide increased access to the research projects and results.

PNW On-Farm Testing—PNW publications on on-farm testing methodologies and related resources help provide growers and Ag advisers with practical approaches on how to 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 also available.

Web Resource Links—This extensive listing of related Web sites also provides access to additional information resources, and is continually being expanded and updated.

Coming Events—This provides an ongoing listing of conferences, field days, tours and other events related to conservation farming systems in the Northwest, as well as applicable national and

international events. Detailed descriptions and agendas of seasonal field days and tours on direct seed cropping systems in the PNW are also posted.

Search Engine—This search engine allows extensive key-word searches of the entire Web site.

PNW Direct Seed Association—There is a link to the Web site of this new Pacific Northwest grower association that is an increasingly important partner in research and educational efforts on direct seed cropping systems.

PNW Direct Seed E-Mail/Web List Server

This List Server, initiated in late 1999 at the request of NW growers, offers an exciting communications link on new information resources, events, research results, technology innovations and experiences in the Inland Northwest. It also helps provide access to direct seed systems technology that may be adapted to Northwest production conditions from other regions and countries. Messages are sent by e-mail and also stored on the List Server Web site for later access, and for those added to the List Server over time.

The initial address list included about 200 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 dry land cropping areas of the Inland Northwest. From this initial base network, the List Server continues to grow with the addition of interested growers and Ag support personnel across the region.

The List Server Web site is easily accessed for subscription and viewing of messages through the main PNW Web site (<http://pnwsteep.wsu.edu>). All interested growers and Ag support personnel are encouraged to participate in this new List Server. The goal is to help develop a stronger communication network and partnership among growers, researchers, Ag-support groups and agencies, and Ag industry to accelerate the development and grower adaptation of direct seed systems in the region.

Impacts—The Web site averaged over 200 hits per day in 2001. Over 180 messages have been posted. The distribution list for the list server more than doubled to 460 subscribers this year, up from the 200 initially in late 1999.

The website and list serve was selected for a Certificate of Excellence in Web Pages in the 2000 American Society of Agronomy Educational Materials Awards Program.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

USDA-CSREES PNW STEEP (Solutions To Environmental and Economic Problems) conservation research and educational program
USDA-CSREES Columbia Plateau Wind Erosion/Air Quality Project
Washington State University
Oregon State University
Don Wysocki, OSU Extension Soil Scientist, Pendleton
Russ Karow, OSU Extension Agronomist, Corvallis
Stephen Guy, UI Extension Crop Management Specialist, Moscow
Bill Schillinger, WSU Dryland Agronomist, Lind
Joe Yenish, WSU Extension Weeds Specialist, Pullman
John Burns, WSU Extension Agronomist, Pullman
Greg Schwab, WSU Extension Soils Specialist, Pullman
Dennis Tonks, WSU Extension Dryland Cropping Systems Specialist, Davenport
Larry Robertson, UI Extension Crop Management Specialist, Aberdeen
Brad Brown, UI Extension Crop Management Specialist, Parma

The Future

Direct seed intensive cropping systems are relatively new and rapidly evolving farming systems in this region and around the world. As the adoption of direct seed system increases in the Northwest, there will be an increasing need for accelerated research and extension efforts to support growers in developing and maintaining successful systems.

For More Information

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