

## **Expanding Internet / E-mail Access to NW Direct Seed Cropping Systems Technology**

### ***The Situation***

The Internet computer network and E-mail access is expanding at a phenomenal rate and rapidly becoming major technology access and communications tools for growers and Ag support personnel. Most local offices of cooperative extension, conservation districts, Ag agencies and industries, and an increasing number of growers in the Pacific Northwest have Internet and E-mail access. A recent USDA Agricultural Statistics Service study showed that about 40 percent of PNW growers had Internet access in 1999, up dramatically from 18 percent in 1997. Washington growers lead the region and are second in the nation at 50 percent. At the same time, growers are increasingly moving towards direct seeding and more intensive cropping systems to improve production efficiency, profitability, and cropland productivity, as well as effectively controlling soil erosion for environmental protection in addressing salmon recovery, air quality, water quality regulations and other environmental issues.

### ***Our Response***

Increasing computer technology access on direct seed cropping systems technologies has focused on two areas: 1) expansion of a current regional Web site; and 2) creation of a new regional E-mail / Internet list server. Both can provide rapid access to up-to-date technologies and information resources on direct seed systems.

### ***Achievements***

#### Internet Web Site - PNW Conservation Tillage Systems Technology Source

This Web site was initiated in 1997 and contains a wealth of information on direct seed cropping systems.

One of the main sources of new technologies has been the PNW STEEP (Solutions To Environmental and Economic Problems) research and educational program on conservation farming systems.

The entire *PNW Conservation Tillage Handbook Series* of PNW Extension publications (156 through 1999) is now on the Web site (<http://pnwsteeep.wsu.edu>). The *PNW Conservation Tillage Update* newsletters are now on-line, expanding access beyond the current PNW mailing list of about 2,800. A calendar on Northwest direct seed systems events is maintained, including applicable events across North America.

There is a Web site section on the new Northwest Direct Seed Cropping Systems Conferences where you can choose between the 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 Conferences with direct access Web site URL address extension (/conf98, /conf99, /conf2k, and /conf01, respectively) utilized in publicizing the conferences and providing later access to the proceedings and conference video information.

Annual progress reports for the PNW STEEP research program are added to the Web site to provide access to descriptions of STEEP projects and progress. Annual PNW STEEP On-farm Test Results publications and other related resources and links have also been added to a new On-Farm Testing section.

Other new features in 1999 included: 1) new design of the Web site index that is at the top of each section; 2) search engine, allowing extensive key-word searches of the entire Web site; 3) Direct Seed Resource Directories, providing two editions of an in-depth listing of publications, videos and other educational resources; 4)

new PNW Direct Seed Case Study Series of publications documenting experiences of long-term direct seed growers in the Northwest -- a total of 16 will be completed by mid-2000; 5) links to other applicable Web resource sites; 6) description of and link to the Web site for the PNW Direct Seed E-mail / Internet List Server (see below).

A new "threaded discussion" page titled "PNW Direct Seed Systems Forum" is being developed to facilitate more in-depth discussions on direct seeding and more intensive cropping systems and technologies among growers and Ag support personnel. It should be completed by early 2000.

#### PNW Direct Seed E-Mail / Internet List Server

This new list server was initiated in October 1999. It offers an exciting communications link on new information resources, events, research results, technology innovations and experiences from the dryland production regions of the Inland Northwest. It will also help provide access to direct seed systems technology that may be adapted to Northwest production conditions from other regions and countries. Messages are received by e-mail and also stored on the list server Internet site for later access.

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 dryland cropping areas of the Inland Northwest. From this initial base network, the list server will expand to interested growers and other Ag support personnel across the region.

The list server Internet 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 PNW Conservation Tillage Systems Technology Source Web site and new PNW Direct Seed E-mail / Internet List Server are helping meet the

expanding PNW demand for computer technology access and an improved communications network on direct seed cropping systems. The Web site averaged over 400 hits per day in 1999, providing increasing access to conservation cropping systems technology developed through STEEP and related PNW research programs. The mailing list for the PNW Direct Seed E-mail / Internet List Server list server grew from the 200 initial base of Ag support contacts in late October to over 280 by the end of 1999, and is expected to show continued growth in 2000.

## *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

## *The Future*

Access to the Internet and E-mail by NW producers and Ag support personnel, and interest in direct seed cropping systems are all expected to grow dramatically in the next decade. Consequently, there will be increasing demands for computer technology access and a computer communications network to support growers in developing and maintaining successful direct seed systems. The PNW land grant universities will continue to provide a key leadership role in developing and providing access to new technologies for successful direct seed cropping systems.

## *For More Information*

Roger Veseth  
WSU / UI Extension Conservation Tillage Specialist  
University of Idaho  
Plant, Soil and Entomological Sciences Dept.  
PO BOX 442339  
Moscow, ID 83844-2339  
Phone: 208-885-6389  
Fax: 208-885-7760  
E-mail: [rveseth@uidaho.edu](mailto:rveseth@uidaho.edu)  
Web site: [pnwsteep.wsu.edu](http://pnwsteep.wsu.edu)

C:\My Documents\IMPACT\Impacts-1999\veseth2.doc 1999