



# Conservation in Washington: Powered by People



## MAKING AN IMPACT:

- *Landowners are able to plant crops in just one pass, which reduces soil disturbance, irrigation, and fuel.*
- *SYCD predicts that over the next three years it can double the amount of no-till acres in the district from an average of 330 acres a year to almost 700 acres a year.*

## SOUTH YAKIMA CONSERVATION DISTRICT - EQUIPMENT LEASE PROGRAM MAKES NO-TILL FARMING AFFORDABLE FOR LANDOWNERS

Soil erosion on agricultural land poses a threat to both crop production and water quality. Topsoil that washes away in the rain or blows off can increase sedimentation in water and spread pollutants. One solution to this is no-till farming. This alternative to conventional tillage reduces soil disturbance by creating seedbeds and planting seeds in one field pass. However, no-till equipment can be expensive. That's why South Yakima Conservation District offers a no-till drill lease program to make this conservation practice affordable.

**FINDING A COMMON PATH** Since 2000, South Yakima Conservation District (SYCD) has offered an equipment lease program that allows farmers to rent a small no-till drill owned by the conservation district. Recently—due to the advancement of no-till technology and interest by local landowners—the SYCD Board of Supervisors agreed to add a second, larger no-till drill to the lease program. Using a no-till equipment loan program sponsored by their partner, Spokane Conservation District, SYCD financed 75 percent of the new no-till drill, which likely will pay for itself in no time. The drill is a Great Plains 1006NT with the ability to plant three different seed types at three different rates at the same time.

**RESULTS ON THE GROUND** The first time SYCD's new no-till drill was rented, the landowner planted oats for cover crop, grass seed, and alfalfa in just one pass instead of three. No-till farming has helped SYCD landowners reduce erosion, fuel, irrigation, labor, and machinery costs. No-till may also increase yields because of higher water infiltration and storage capacity.

By adding a larger, no-till drill with more capabilities to their lease program, SYCD predicts that over the next three years it can double the amount of no-till acres in the district from an average of 330 acres a year to almost 700 acres a year. During that time, SYCD also plans to assess season-end results of fields planted with the no-till drill and compare them to conventionally farmed fields.

"I was able to plant three different seeds at three different rates saving me time and money," said one landowner of the SYCD no-till lease program. "I would never have been able to purchase such an expensive implement. Thanks to SYCD I can rent it for a very reasonable rate."



Local landowner uses the South Yakima Conservation District lease program to rent the new Great Plains no-till drill.