



## **USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference**

### **Conservation Tillage Education: Providing Extension Agents with information for Conservation**

Conservation tillage is a systems process that provides many benefits for conserving and protecting natural resources. Some of these benefits are better water quality, better soil quality, enhanced wildlife habitat and cleaner air to name a few. Personnel at the University of Georgia in cooperation with other State, Federal and Local organizations developed and delivered training to Extension Agents to better equip them with information on the benefits of conservation tillage. A survey of the county agents was conducted to determine specific training needs and attitudes towards CT. The survey indicated most county agents had a positive attitude towards CT systems, but their knowledge was weak on the differences between CT systems and conventional systems in terms of: inputs, equipment, changes in soil quality and fertility, effects on yields and quality of different commodities, and specifics on how to implement CT practices. The survey also indicated that more information on the economics of CT systems was needed. Agents preferred a combination of classroom and field training. The results of the survey were used to develop a two-part training to provide teaching opportunities on operations tailored for the fall and spring seasons. Agents were also tested prior to and after the training to measure their increased knowledge, confidence and attitude towards aspects of conservation tillage. Overall there was an increase in the agents knowledge, attitude and confidence towards conservation tillage as well as their willingness to teach farmers and others.

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