

Alert No. 12 (11 September 2010)

1. Landscapes Transformed: The History of Conservation Tillage and Direct Seeding by C. Wayne Lindwall and Bernie Sonntag (2010)

The University of Saskatchewan's Knowledge Impact in Society Project has published a book entitled: Landscapes Transformed: The History of Conservation Tillage and Direct Seeding. This nineteen-chapter book is the work of 35 individuals who were (and still are, in many cases) involved in the evolution and adoption of conservation tillage and direct seeding in the Canadian Prairies. The book provides insights into the agronomic and economic factors that motivated farmers to shift away from summer fallow and towards conservation tillage practices. The book shares details about interesting and often controversial history of conservation tillage, and it offers first-hand account from some of the Prairies' early adopters of conservation tillage. [The book can be downloaded as PDF.](#)

2. Resource Conserving Technologies in South Asia: Frequently asked Questions by M. L. Jat et al.

This FAQ publication is published jointly by the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia (CSISA) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT). [The publication can be downloaded as PDF copy.](#)

3. Recommendations of the 4th Mediterranean Meetings on No Tillage (4th MMNT), Setif (Algeria), 3-5 May 2010, organised by FERT, INRA, ITGC and ATU Setif

The participants to the 4th Mediterranean Meetings on No Tillage (4th MMNT) expressed the conviction that the future of sustainable agriculture for the Mediterranean countries is through the conservation agriculture (CA) route involving minimum soil disturbance (i.e., no tillage and direct seeding), soil organic cover from residues and cover crops, and crop diversification. This conviction evolved through presentations of concepts and field evidence of the performance of CA in several Mediterranean countries and elsewhere in other regions with similar environments that set the stage for discussions on the relevance of conservation agriculture to sustainable production intensification and management of ecosystem services. These presentations and the workshop discussions in the working groups and in the plenary clearly described the emergence of CA as an alternative practice to address the negative consequences of conventional tillage-based agriculture. [The recommendations that emerged from the two-day meeting are available as PDF.](#)

4. Conservation Agriculture and Sustainable Crop Intensification in Lesotho by Laura Silici. Integrated Crop Management Vol. 10, 2010, FAO.

Lesotho is a small mountainous country characterised by extensive land degradation and erratic climatic conditions. In recent years a growing number of development agencies have been promoting Conservation Agriculture (CA) as a means to enhance rural livelihoods through sustainable production intensification. This publication is a case study prepared under the FAO Framework for Sustainable Crop Production Intensification and draws on the data collected by FAO in 2006 and illustrates the impact of CA and more specifically the local version of CA, the *Likoti* system in the south-eastern highlands of the Qacha's Nek district and in the western lowlands of Butha-Buthe and Borea. According to these data, the adoption of *Likoti* has brought significant advantages compared to conventional tillage. The publication is available as hardcopy from FAO (contact Theodor.Friedrich@fao.org) and will soon be available online at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1650e/i1650e00.pdf>

5. CA Training Material is now available at the FAO CA website

A training material section has been created at the FAO CA website <http://www.fao.org/ag/ca/8.html> from where training material can be downloaded. This section will be linked to other sources of training material over time.

6. 5th World Congress of Conservation Agriculture incorporating 3rd Farming Systems Design Conference, 26-29th September 2011 Brisbane Australia.

The WCCA website is now online at <http://www.wcca2011.org/>. Australia, host for the 5th WCCA and 3rd FSD, welcomes scientists and practitioners to Brisbane to discuss current and future developments of sustainable agriculture next year. Conference program options and tours will cater for different interest groups, and take advantage of Brisbane's proximity to intensive, extensive and sub-tropical farming, as well as to world leading research groups and facilities.

7. European Congress on Conservation Agriculture: Towards agro-environmental, climate and energetic sustainability, to be held in Madrid 4th-7th October 2010

The Spanish Conservation Agriculture Association / Living Soils (AEAC/SV), jointly with the European Conservation Agriculture Federation (ECAAF) and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) are organizing the "**European Congress on Conservation Agriculture: Towards agro-environmental, climate and energetic sustainability**", to be held in Madrid 4th-7th October 2010.

This European Congress offers a quality leap forward on issues under a holistic view within the field of Conservation Agriculture. This event will comprise presentations communications and experiences delivering the latest results achieved, not only in the traditional Conservation Agriculture areas of research, but also in those that have been opened in response to current

problems facing the environment, including **climate change**, **energy saving** and **profitability**, and the search for models of **sustainability** in European agro-ecosystems.

Development agencies and donors, policy makers and administrators, environmentalists, farmers, agricultural scientists and advisors, and the agricultural industry are welcome to attend this event. The Congress has attracted among its keynote speakers and delegates, authorities and leading scientists on **conservation agriculture**, **soil management**, **agronomy**, **crop protection** and **global environmental issues**.

Additional details about this European Congress can be found in the flyer enclosed and in the Website: www.eurocongressca.eu

8. Updating CA Data base in AquaStat, FAO

We are updating the CA land area data base displayed in AquaStat (www.fao.org/ag/ca), and will be contacting our regular sources of information in the next few weeks. However, anyone else who would like to provide information on the land area under CA systems at the national level would be most welcome. Ideally, we would appreciate receiving the CA area information at the sub-national level, together with any relevant historical information on adoption, cropping pattern, farm size, agro-ecology, constraints, etc.

For the recording pls. adhere to the quantification of the CA definition on the FAO-CA website (<http://www.fao.org/ag/ca/6c.html>):

1. Minimum Soil Disturbance: Minimum soil disturbance refers to low disturbance no-tillage and direct seeding. The disturbed area must be less than 15 cm wide or less than 25% of the cropped area (whichever is lower). There should be no periodic tillage that disturbs a greater area than the aforementioned limits. Strip tillage is allowed if the disturbed area is less than the set limits.
2. Organic soil cover: Three categories are distinguished: 30-60%, >60-90% and >90% ground cover, measured immediately after the direct seeding operation. Area with less than 30% cover is not considered as CA.
3. Crop rotation/association: Rotation/association should involve at least 3 different crops. However, repetitive wheat or maize cropping is not an exclusion factor for the purpose of this data collection, but rotation/association is recorded where practiced.

We would further like to stress that the database counts actual land area under annual crops with CA (permanent no-till). Area under perennial crops will be recorded separately. No-till area by crop will not be recorded to avoid double recording of the same land area.

Amir Kassam
Moderator
CA-CoP-Listserv

Plant Production and Protection Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome
Italy
e-mail: amirkassam786@gmail.com
URL: www.fao.org/ag/ca

To unsubscribe from the CA-CoP-L list, send an e-mail message to Mailserv@mailserv.fao.org leaving the subject line blank and placing only the one-line message: 'UNSUBSCRIBE CA-CoP-L' in the message part without any further text such as a name, address, etc.

To subscribe to the CA-CoP-L list, send an e-mail to Mailserv@mailserv.fao.org leaving the subject line blank and placing only the one-line message: 'SUBSCRIBE CA-CoP-L' in the message part without any further text such a name, address, etc.