My farming operation

Organic farmers and government programs (EQIP and CSP)
James Maberry, Wetland team Leader, NRCS in Chillicothe, MO.
Seventh generation farmer in Carroll county, MO
Primary rotation has been soybeans-wheat-red clover hay/pasture.
Secondary rotation; Popcorn-wheat/oats and radishes-soybeans-wheat (as pasture).
Cow/calf operation (non organic).
Use chicken litter and cow manure for fertilizer
Basic principles of my organic operation

- Most of Missouri farmland is not sustainable without direct livestock involvement.
- Organic matter (or carbon) is king!
- Calcium (or lime) is the queen!
- Maximum production does not mean maximum profit.
- Minimum till/no till is not practical with organic farming (yet!).
After each harvest, a new crop should be planted.

Rotation should be summer annual (corn or beans)-winter/spring annual(wheat with red clover)- fall annual (oats and radishes).

Shouldn’t trade bushels for tons of soil.

Weed control is an ongoing battle!
Crop rotation

- Popcorn: May 2010
- Wheat: Oct. 2010
- Stubble graze w/ cows: July thru August 2011
- Oats/wheat (cover crop): August 2011
- Graze cattle: Oct. thru January 2012
- Soybeans: May 2012
- Wheat (cover crop): Nov. 2012
- Graze cattle: Nov. 2012 thru August 2013
- Oats/wheat (cover crop): August 2013
- Popcorn: May 2014
Tillage operations for Soybeans

- Disc or Field cultivate (FC) the cover crop (late April)
- Disc one to two weeks ahead of planting
- FC day of planting (late May to early June)
- Plant within 18hrs of FC
- Rotary Hoe within 72 hours
- Harrow 5 days after planting
- Rotary Hoe 10 days after planting
Tillage operations (cont)

- Row Cultivating (RC) within 3 weeks after planting, usually twice or three times.
- Hand weed as necessary
- Combine and store on the farm
- No till wheat
- Broadcast red clover (mid March)
Livestock Operation

After harvest of crops (late October) cows are moved in to graze crop stubble.
Hay is fed on crop fields.
Cows moved off in mid January.
Cows are brought in early April to graze wheat/red clover cover crop until late summer or early fall.

Hi-density/mob grazing OR strip grazing is used when needed.
Who are we?

- Smaller acres but mostly full time
- Tend to own our land or owned by family members.
- Not much bottomland, mostly hills
- Most have livestock and grain
- We tend not to join other Ag groups unless organic co-ops.
What’s our interest?

- “new” cash crops
- Cover crops
- Soil health/ fertility/organic matter
- Weed control
- Markets
- Talking with other organic farmers
Talking points with organic farmers

- Brush up on your biology and soils information
- Promote narrow base terraces and waterways instead of broad base with UGO.
- Crop rotation
- Keep up on organic crop prices
- Cover crops
- Don’t be critical of tillage
- Find out if other organic farmers in the area
- Listen!
Practices for organic farmers

- Promote narrow base terraces instead of broad base.
- Cover crops
- Field borders
- No till equipment and /or flamers
- Hi residue cultivators and rotary hoes
- Nutrient management for manure
- Cost share on crop rotation with short term grass crop for transition
- Allow grazing practices on cropland (to manage cover crops and forage grasses in 2 to 3 year rotation)
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