

NRCS NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street • Suite 600 St. Paul, MN 55101-1854 • (651) 602-7900
Web: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 14, 2008

Contact:

[Julie MacSwain](#), State Public Affairs Specialist, (651) 602-7859

Save ENERGY, Save MONEY

SAINT PAUL, MN– The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed four energy tools designed to increase energy awareness in agriculture and to help farmers and ranchers identify where they can reduce their energy costs. The results generated by these tools are estimates based on NRCS models and are illustrative of the magnitude of savings.

Check out the following website to view the four energy tools: <http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service developed the "Energy Estimator" to calculate the diesel fuel usage and costs associated with various tillage practices, helping producers to make practical, money-saving decisions. Conservation practices such as nutrient management, crop residue management, irrigation management, windbreaks, and contour farming also help to reduce the nation's dependence on fossil fuels while saving farmers money and helping to protect soil and water resources.

More information about USDA's energy strategy is available at www.usda.gov/energy including a USDA Energy Fact Sheet, the Energy Calculator, and details of USDA's energy-related loan and grant programs.

A producer can save at least 2.2 gallons of fuel per acre by going from conventional tillage methods to no-till or strip-till. At April 2008 diesel prices, this amounts to \$8.70 per acre in production cost savings. On a farm with 1,000 acres of cropland, these savings add up to 2,200 gallons of diesel fuel per year valued at \$8,700.

-more-

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

No-till is a conservation practice that leaves the crop residue undisturbed from harvest through planting except for narrow strips that cause minimal soil disturbance. Strip-till is a conservation practice that disturbs only narrow strips of residue. Crop residues are materials left in an agricultural field after the crop has been harvested. These residues may include stalks and stubble (stems), leaves and seed pods. Good management of field residues can increase efficiency of irrigation and control of erosion. No-till can be used for almost any crop in almost any soil and can save producers labor costs and fuel. It's a sound investment for the environment and the farm.

In addition to energy efficiencies and cost savings, no-till and strip-till have several environmental benefits. They increase the organic matter in the soil, making it more stable and helping prevent soil erosion. They also reduce greenhouse gases because it requires less fuel and stores carbon in the soil. Other benefits of using no-till and strip-till as part of a resource management system include:

- Increased earthworm populations that improve soil quality—an average of 540,000 earthworms per acre versus 285,000 in conventional tillage;
- Increased water infiltration—cutting evaporation and runoff by at least 70 percent;
- Reduced tilling time per acre—by as much as two-thirds; and
- Improved wildlife habitat.

NRCS supports conservation practices that save producers money and improve the environmental health of the Nation. For more information on energy-saving conservation practices, visit the NRCS “Save ENERGY, Save MONEY” Web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov.

#