

Soil Conservation Award – Hineman Farms

The basis of selection of individual awardees will be determined on the following points:

- a. Use of land according to its capabilities.
- b. Completeness of conservation plan.
- c. Balance of farm enterprise.
- d. Quality of conservation work completed and maintenance of practices.
- e. Special Practices: In addition to traditional practices, special practices such as grassland development, forestry, pollution abatement, riparian management, water quality, and residue management should be considered.

This year's Soil Conservation Award winner is Hineman Farms. According to Andy, their operation went completely no-till at least 5 years ago, and started doing some work with cover crops in roughly 2009. Currently, they are using their practices on roughly 7,000 acres. The crop rotation being used is producing 3 crops in 4 years, using a wheat, fallow, row crop variation, with some continuous cropping from time to time. They began using these practices when they started farming some neighbor's acreage and knew they had to reduce their work load to cover all the ground. They had also been following the KSU field studies that had shown increased yields where applied.

The biggest benefits they have seen from these practices has been of course moisture conservation, soil protection, as well as improved soil health, and decrease in fertilizer expenses. When it came to using the cover crops, they were able to break up the hard pan in an area that had been compacted from use as a road construction storage location. It took a few years of planting various crops to finally make it a useful location again. Although they are receiving this award for soil conservation, they have been actively involved with tree plantings and wildlife conservation. They currently have a pollinator plot with Pheasants Forever, hoping to help bring the population back around. Andy mentioned he believes there's more that can be done in conservation besides the cropping aspect, and they try to stay involved with what they can.