

Farmer Riggin'

By Will Mann, Fishing Creek SWCD, Halifax NC

Tom Harris built his machine to accomplish what he calls "controlled tillage". Though the machine accomplishes a tilled strip like many other implements on the market, he can put different cutting blades on the roto-tiller to accomplish different width tilled strips to perform "controlled tillage" or matching the tillage to the crop.

The overall make-up of the machine consists of (per row) a coulter, a subsoil shank with winged tip (cutting approximately 10 inches deep), a roto-tiller, and a press roller for leveling the tilled strip.

Mr. Harris has operated the machine that he designed himself since 1993 and has continued to refine it ever since. He strives to "match the amount of tillage to the crop you are trying to grow". "The three quarters that you are not farming (that which is not in the tilled strip) will renew to form part of what is Renewable Agriculture (continuous soil building and improvement) and not Sustainable Agriculture", states Mr. Harris. "Renewable Agriculture is making a crop and building the soil at the same time. Renewable Agriculture is a step above Sustainable Agriculture. There is the possibility of building soil on every acre, every year," states Mr. Harris.