

HAS BEING GALLED LEFT YOU FEELING INFERTILE AND UNPRODUCTIVE?

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Remember how touching those sore places was best accomplished by powder puff only. The Carroll Taylor farm in Union County has come up with a new method to treat those galled spots in the field. One doesn't have to travel far in the Piedmont of North Carolina to see highly eroded red spots in many of the fields. These areas typically have poor germination rates, show signs of drought stress much sooner, and need to be worked over a narrower moisture range than the rest of the field. Even after crops were well into the growing season, these galled areas were recognizable by shorter and less healthy plants.

The Soil Quality Team visited this farm in April. With continuous no-till being practiced on this farm over the last seven years, these areas are conspicuously absent on the Taylor farm in the Carolina Slate Belt. The powder puff being used on this farm is continuous no-till and the use of cover crops. The Taylors are happy to report that crop yields and plant stands are similar throughout the field. Areas that they remember as being galled since childhood are not obvious anymore. The need for lime is less and less often, and crop yields are up, particularly in drier years. The Ap horizon on these channery soils has now redeveloped an A horizon, about 3 inches thick, with a definite increase in soil organic matter, lighter bulk density and increased infiltration rates. Could Continuous No-Till be the powder puff for your sore spots? Give it a try.

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