

Milan AgResearch and Education Center

Discovery

The AgResearch and Education Center at Milan is known as the birthplace of Tennessee no-till. Starting in the 1960s, researchers at Milan concentrated on finding the most cost-effective way to control erosion and maintain soil productivity. Their work served as a catalyst for the no-till farming movement, which made agriculture more environmentally and economically sustainable. Today the center supports more than 100 research projects, many of which still focus on no-till crop production. As more farmers have adopted no-till, our research emphasis has shifted to improving no-till practices. The goal remains sustainable, profitable agriculture production that also maintains the quality of the environment.

Innovation

Due to rising costs, producers are adopting precision agriculture technologies to increase production and improve profitability. Precision agriculture allows farmers to automatically regulate the application of inputs like fertilizer and pesticides — applying just the right amount and exactly where they are needed. Among the top precision tools on the market is the cotton yield monitor, which was developed at the center by Dr. John Wilkerson, an agricultural engineer with UT AgResearch. More recently researchers have evaluated auto-guidance planting, tillage and spraying systems, planter row shutoff, and greenseeker technology. This research will help producers make the best management decisions for their farms when it comes to updating technology.

Application

The information collected from the center's studies is invaluable to Tennessee farmers. It allows them to optimize their resources, make the best decisions for their operations, and recognize significant cost savings. The center shares its research findings with area producers through UTIA publications and through public field days like the Milan No-Till Crop Production Field Day. The No-Till Field Day, the largest conservation tillage event in the nation, has been taking place at the center since 1981. Thousands of visitors from around the world come to Milan on the fourth Thursday in July of even numbered years to learn the latest technologies related to no-till crop production.



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West Tennessee Agricultural Museum

One of the largest collections of agricultural artifacts in the nation is housed at the West Tennessee Agricultural Museum.

With more than 15,000 items on display, the museum tells the story of rural life in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Visitors see how household chores like cooking, cleaning and ironing were performed without electricity. They view basic farming implements and the tools of blacksmiths, carpenters and doctors. And they tour the social gathering places of the day: the church, the school and the general store.

The museum is open weekdays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Please call 731-686-8067 to schedule a guided tour or a large group showing. Admission is free.

About Us

Situated in the heart of the state's row crop production area, the AgResearch and Education Center at Milan facilitates more than 100 research projects annually on Tennessee's leading row crops (corn, cotton, soybeans and wheat). The center is composed of 884 acres of both upland and bottomland soils, similar to those found across West Tennessee.

Founded in 1962, the center is known as the birthplace of Tennessee No-Till. No-till is a method of farming where the soil is left undisturbed between the harvest of one crop and the planting of another. No-till reduces soil erosion from wind and water runoff; saves farmers time, fuel, labor, pollution.

The AgResearch and Education Center at Milan contributes more than \$1.5 million to the local economy annually.

While no-till was not initially popular with farmers in the 1960s, thanks to the efforts of agricultural researchers, nearly 75 percent of Tennessee producers now use no-till in their farming operations. An additional 15 percent use some other form of conservation tillage. Every other year, farmers from around the world visit the center for the Milan No-Till Crop Production Field Day to learn how to farm more efficiently. The field day has been taking place since 1981.

Research at Milan continues to concentrate on no-till crop production. Current studies involve cropping systems, fertilizer sources and rates, crop variety breeding and development, pest control, and precision agriculture. New studies evaluating the establishment and production of switchgrass for use as a biofuel have been initiated.

In addition to agricultural research, the center is known for its educational and outreach programs. The facility is home to the West Tennessee Agricultural Museum. The museum hosts dozens of local school field trips in addition to the annual Fall Folklore Jamboree, a cultural heritage event held on the grounds each October. The AgResearch and Education Center also is the site for many 4-H and FFA activities.

Visit the AgResearch website at <http://agresearch.tennessee.edu>.

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12-0041 E11-7315-00-010-13 750-08/12

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University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.