Tillage Systems with Peanut in Halifax County, North Carolina: An Historical Perspective.


Twenty years ago approximately 25,000 acres of peanut were produced in Halifax county North Carolina exclusively in conventional tillage systems. A significant portion of fields where peanut were produced are considered at high risk for water erosion. Declines in soil productivity and crop yield due to intensive conventional tillage practices led to development of regulations subsequently leading to implementation of soil conservation practices to address erosion issues on many fields in the county. Several peanut growers began experimenting with no-till production but experienced little success. However, one grower began using strip till as an alternative to both conventional and reduced tillage and over the course of the past 20 years this practice has proven to be very successful. Advantages often expressed by growers implementing strip tillage include soil moisture conservation, reduced erosion, less disease and insect problems, and improved soil productivity and higher yield of peanut and other crops. Today, approximately 50% of the 5100 acres of peanut are planted using some form of reduced tillage. These systems range from strip tillage into stubble from the previous crop to a single disking operation in the fall and establishment of a small grain cover crop followed by spring strip tillage at planting.