

No Sentiment for the Moldboard Plow: Grant Thomas and No-tillage. (S02-tyler095106-Oral)

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Abstract:

This symposium honors Dr. Grant W. Thomas for his many contributions to soil science and agronomy. These contributions were especially significant in the area of conservation tillage, particularly no-tillage. Some of his earliest work addressed the issue of surface application of fertilizers, such as phosphorus. This pioneering research convinced many agronomists that surface application of nutrients would sufficiently supply a no-tillage crop. The ability to increase organic matter in no-tillage soils, now referred to as carbon sequestration, was recognized by Dr. Thomas and others by the early 1970's. Beneficial changes in soil properties with no-tillage were also being reported during that time, well before the emergence of the concept of soil quality or soil health. He and his colleagues also did pioneering research on surface liming and the role of macropore development in no-tillage soils. Without Dr. Thomas' work and the influence it had on the research of his peers and former graduate students, the adoption of no-tillage would not have occurred as rapidly in the Southeast USA.

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