The Reason For Direct Seeding. More Time With My Family, And Sustainable Cropping So My Children Can Do It When I’m Done!
Keys to our start into Direct Seeding

Our Issues

• Winter annual grasses i.e. Jointed goat grass and downy broom.

• High cost from multiple tillage passes to condition residue for seeding.

• Wind erosion.

• Rock Picking!
What started me down this path...

Grant Poole, Tom Poole, Mark Sheffel, Bob Bandy Jr.
Where we started

• Spring wheat. Traditionally, though high cost with little return, direct seeding with chem-fallow would solve many of those issues. And we knew we couldn’t miss with moisture in seed zone during spring.

• Problem, we needed to get over our whole farm, and a quarter section a year would not do. But, a quarter of my farm in a crop with little to no return wouldn't either.
Solution... Direct seed Winter Canola!

- Roundup ready to get rid of grassy weeds.
- Breaks cereal diseases.
- Taproot to breakup hardpan layer!
- Mines deep soil nutrients.
- Profitability potential of a winter crop.
- It’s pretty...
What we found

• Chem-fallow held moisture all year very close to surface.
• The soil was hard and claudy when we seeded in the fall.
• Yetter coulters conditioned the soil in the fallow to be more mellow during the transition period.
• We actually gathered more moisture from summer rains in chem-fallow than summerfallow.
• We were already experiencing yield losses from grassy weeds in our current tillage system.
Coulters on JD 1600 Toolbar
• Canola has to be in moisture, it will come through a good amount soil if it is in moisture.
• However, less cover over seed is better.
• More residue=more moisture, but residue in the seed row or seed zone is bad.
• In fall seeding the moisture WILL dry down at least an inch, so compensate for that.
• Spray when weeds are small, and use ENOUGH and VARIED chemical!
• Adjuvants are worth it!
Largest barriers to entry!

1. Convincing Landowners
2. Equipment Costs
3. System not proven
   Risk Risk Risk!!!

But...

What are you risking now?
1. Landowners: The principle of farmland investment is Soil! If soil is eroding, and it is, then by extension they are at risk to lose the principle of the investment. I don’t know a banker that would advise such investing. Also, if there are other problems such as grassy weeds it may be necessary to use alternative crops to solve that, and what better time to try direct seeding!
2. Equipment costs: Used equipment, custom seeders, modifying older equipment. There are some fine custom seeders out there that can show you what is possible as they have experience already in no-till. It is a great option and well worth the money spent.

Many older drills such as JD Izb, or Hz and International 150 drills are capable of seeding into reduced tillage fallow fields. If you can find a way to fertilize with starter and top dress.
Older drills like the concord and flexi-coil 5000 can be modified with openers to accomplish your desired end result!

I would emphasize seed and fertilizer placement!

Getting started it the most important part, having the ideal drill is not.
3. System not proven:
Look at neighbors... ok sometimes that will steer you away lol.
Find neighbors trying it that you respect, even if they are a good distance away.
Start with reduced tillage and work towards no-till.
Get a drill you think will seed both reduced/no-till, but will still do a good job on summerfallow, it makes the drill more affordable.
Overcoming initial Costs!!!

Programs!

NRCS has been a great resources
- Conservation Stewardship Program
- EQUIP general signup
- EQUIP Energy Incentive program
- Spokane Conservation District “Direct Seed Loan”!
• Identify what you believe would change for the better, and be passionate about it!
• Get with other farmers with the same mindset. Dig in other farmers fields (with their permission ; ] )
• Ask growers what they were trying to accomplish when their results look less than impressive, they will usually tell you what they did wrong and save you the mistake.
This is summerfallow
This is my best canola stand!
From Red line up was DNS previous crop.
Definitely not perfect!
Thank you!