

Keokuk farmer backs no-till method

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Jack Neuendorf of Keokuk is one of the few farmers in this area to use conservation tillage, but he believes it's a method that will be used extensively in the future.

"I know it's a coming," he said during a recent interview. "Within two years everyone will have to be doing it to get in on the government programs."

Recently, the government has urged farmers to change to the no-till method of farming.

"I don't blame the government," he

said. "I've seen a lot of dirt coming down that river. We've all been guilty of plowing in the fall and watching it wash away."

When the no-till farming method is used, the fields are left unplowed. The fields are shredded in the fall and alternate rows of corn and beans are planted on the ridges in the spring.

Besides controlling erosion, no-till farming cuts the amount of time spent in the field by 60-70 percent, which also decreases machinery and fuel costs. Neuendorf also stated that his yields have increased since he adopted the new farming method nine

years ago.

"I work a couple of other fields that have been planted in straight corn for 25 years," he explained, "and the no-till fields are getting a better yield."

Neuendorf estimates that his yield has increased by 40-50 bushels an acre and his fuel bill was cut by \$4,000 the first year.

A farmer since 1948, Neuendorf is emphatic about the new farming method: "If I had to go back to conventional farming I think I'd quit. I can use an 80 h.p. tiller and sprayer, and there's no need for a 150-200 h.p. tiller. You don't need them."