

Using Reduced Tillage at Parlee Farms

Mark Parlee
Parlee Farms, Tyngsboro MA
www.parleefarms.com

At Parlee Farms, we farm approximately 100 acres along the Merrimack River in Tyngsboro, MA. We are primarily a pick-your-own fruit farm with our major crops being Apples, Blueberries, Strawberries, Peaches, and Cherries. We also grow 25 acres of corn and pumpkins. This land is seeded down to winter rye which is harvested into round bales at the end of May. The land is then prepared for planting using our two-row Unverferth Zone Builder. Three modifications were made to our two-row Pequea Planter:

1. Dawn Row Cleaners were added;
2. Seed Firmers were installed;
3. One of the closer wheels on each planting unit was replaced with a finger-type closer wheel.

The many advantages of Zone Building has been discussed before. Following are some of the advantages that I see:

1. Prepare fields in much less time;
2. Breakup plow pan;
3. Preserve organic matter in soil;
4. Preserve organic matter on surface for less soil contact with pumpkins;
5. Increased organic matter allows for better utilization of fertilizer.

Overall, the Zone Builder has allowed us to increase the quality and the quantity of our corn and pumpkin production without any increased labor.