

# REXROTH FARMS NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2016

Rexroth Farms is a family farming organization devoted to the promotion of our agricultural lifestyle and the preservation of our agricultural heritage through innovative, sustainable, professional farming practices that benefit our families, employees, land partners and surrounding communities in the areas where we operate.

[www.rexrothfarms.com](http://www.rexrothfarms.com)

[facebook.com/rexrothfarms](https://facebook.com/rexrothfarms)

#rexrothfarms on instagram

## Investing in fields for maximum yields...

**Subsurface Drainage** – is the use of a system of pipes (tile) or ditches to control water levels below the soil surface.

In early 2013, Rexroth Farms began plans for the use of subsurface drainage techniques to effectively manage water conditions on many of our farms. Employees traveled to various places throughout the country to gain knowledge on drainage practices, using a tile plow, RTK technology, and environmental advantages of subsurface drainage. Here is what we learned...

- **Managing your water table** – By keeping water from completely saturating the soil and gathering on the surface, you allow roots to penetrate deeper into the soil without being drowned out, which allows the plant to absorb more nutrients and provide a stronger base for the plant to grow on.
- **Eliminating excess surface water** – prevents plant food (organic matter and fertilizer) from running off, keeps soil covered, helps prevent erosion, and makes field access easier because of the dryer conditions.
- **No-Till System** – Subsurface drainage is a perfect fit for our no till farming practices at Rexroth Farms. The use of drainage tile contributes to promoting a vertical soil environment. This allows water, nutrients, and root systems to move vertically through the soil without resistance from excess water and compaction layers caused by excess tillage.

*Continued on page 2*

*Left: water drained from a field exits an outlet pipe.*

*Right: Our tile plow installing six inch tile for the main run of a drainage system.*



## What now?

Harvest is over, the fields are impassable, and it's cold outside! What is there to do in the winter? Well we may not be as busy as a month like October, but rest assured there is plenty to keep us busy. The winter is when we transport most of our corn to the feed mills in Lancaster County. We also deliver many loads of fertilizer to our fields for springtime application. There is a lot of equipment like combines, tractors, trucks, and planters to inspect and maintain. The cold weather also means that our beef and dairy cattle require more attention and care to ensure they are healthy and comfortable. We also take time in the winter to make improvements to our farms/facilities and as you will read later in this letter; educate ourselves on many agricultural topics.



Continued from page 1...

- **Return on investment** – by draining wet areas of our fields, we are able to produce healthy crops we could not grow much of anything before. The cost of installing a drainage system is quickly paid for by the increase in crop production and positive benefits for the soil. After learning about all the benefits and possible uses for drainage tile, we next educated ourselves on the tools required to install our subsurface drainage system.

**The Plow** – Soil Max Gold Digger Stealth ZD

**The Technology** – RTK, Intellislope, Ag Leader SMS, John Deere Green Star

By using a state of the art tile plow, coupled with RTK guidance and intellislope depth control, we are able to place tile at the exact depth desired with minimum soil disruption while maintaining the required grade to ensure proper drainage.



In late December 2015 and early January 2016, we installed our first tile drainage system! The results were almost immediate. Within a few hours of installing our first run (6" main with an outlet), we observed water flowing through the main and exiting the outlet. The area we drained was approximately six acres and normally laid very wet. We can already see the positive effects of our tile in this area, and can't wait to see the results in the next crop we plant here! We are very excited to continue using our tile plow to install more tile drainage systems on our farms, as well as continuing to learn the benefits of this and various other no till farming practices to contribute to a positive and sustainable future at Rexroth Farms.



*To see more pictures and videos of our tile plowing operation, check out our facebook page!*





## Farm School



The agricultural industry is constantly evolving. New regulations, farming practices, equipment, and scientific discoveries continuously change the way farmers operate. At Rexroth Farms we strive to stay educated on as many agricultural topics as possible in order to ensure success in all aspects of our operation. Over the winter months we promote learning within our workforce by making educational opportunities available for our employees. So far this winter, our employees have attended various educational events. First, seven of us visited the Keystone Farms Show at the York Fair Grounds. This is an annual trip for us, where we can see new products like equipment and seed, as well as network with others in our industry to discuss new ideas and plans for the upcoming year. In early January, Barry Harnish and Daniel Swanson attended the National No-Till Convention in Indianapolis Indiana. While at the convention, Barry and Daniel learned about a wide variety of topics pertaining to no-till farming practices. Some of the topics discussed were the use of cover crops, pollinators, no-till equipment, nutrient management, and soil health. A few weeks later, Abe Mellinger and Cody Miller attended the Farm Journal Crop College in Harrisburg. While in attendance, Abe and Cody got an in depth look at agronomy pertaining to corn, soybeans, and wheat. Topics discussed included sunlight interception, row spacing, plant growth stages, proper nitrogen management, cover crops, and soil structure. After employees return from their educational events, employee meetings are held to share all of the information learned with the entire workforce. By continuously educating our selves and each other, we have and will continue move forward as a successful and sustainable team!

*"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." - Benjamin Franklin*

## Another Great Year!

In 2015 Rexroth Farms enjoyed another successful year of operation. We were fortunate to take on some new land partners, operate new more efficient equipment, hire more young and excited talent, and enjoy more fun and productive days in the field. To celebrate, Rexroth Farms held events in October and January. In October, employees and their families gathered for a fall harvest party. It as chance for our workers to take a break from their busy harvest schedules; and gather with their friends and family. In January, a year end/Christmas party was held in appreciation of all the hard work and time spent, as well as a time of fellowship during the holiday season.

