

National Federation of Conservation Agriculture Clubs

Are you a member of a No-Till Club or Study Group in your area concerned about the degradation of our soils, declining profitability of our farmers and global warming resulting from the adverse effects of decades of conventional tillage practices on South Africa's agriculture, and interested in adopting, or are practicing, conservation agriculture (CA)? If so, read on

Farmer's Weekly, aware that the growing interest in adopting of CA or No-Till by farmers in South Africa is being seriously hampered by the lack of research into, and information available on how to adopt and implement all the principles of CA, believes that a National Federation of Conservation Agriculture Clubs with objectives as mooted below would, as such CA organisations in many other parts of the world do, overcome many of these constraints.

The aim of *Farmer's Weekly* is to, in co-operation with any other like-minded sponsors, establish contact with existing CA/No-Till Clubs and farmer study groups throughout South Africa and invite them to consider becoming members of the proposed Federation, to prepare a draft constitution for consideration by prospective members, and to act as facilitator until the farmer members formally constitute the Federation and take it forward. Naturally, to prevent domination by any one club or study group, the draft constitution would make provision for each to be represented on the Board with casting votes according to its number of paid-up members.

Objectives of the proposed Federation

- To bring together as members of the Federation clubs or study groups ("member clubs or study groups") with the object of promoting promote the adoption of CA principles of minimal soil disturbance (ideally no-till and direct seeding), permanent soil cover (ideally 100% using crop residues and/or green manure cover crops) and multi-cropping (ideally crop rotation and the integration of crops and livestock).
- To assist member clubs or study groups by disseminating and archiving local and international information related to developments and experiences of CA practices.
- To convene an annual conference on a provincial rotational basis to which international and national CA experts and local practicing farmers are invited to address subjects pertinent to its adoption and on-going development.
- To pro-actively seek sponsorship from all state institutions and private organisations, concerned or doing business with the commercial and developing agricultural sectors, to fund operations of the Federation.
- To endeavour to establish new clubs or study groups with similar goals, and to support them in achieving their objectives.
- To promote the adoption of CA practices by the commercial and developing farming sectors and the inclusion of the principles, practices and benefits in the curricula of agricultural colleges, universities and other training institutions or organisations.
- To act as the link between South African and foreign CA agencies, institutions, organisations or individuals.
- To compile, publish, circulate or support the circulation of a newsletter at the discretion of the Board of Management of the Federation.
- To represent the Federation at national and international level on matters relating to Conservation Agriculture.

If you are a member of a CA or No-Till Club or Farmer Study Group, or you know of any party interested in CA, it would be appreciated if you would contact Peter Hittersay, the Farmer's Weekly Facilitator: Federation of CA Clubs in SA, on 011 882 3837, 083 776 4774 or at pdhittersay@telkomsa.net