

# Portage River Watershed of Ohio

## FARM #19

Ron Snyder farms 200 acres with his wife in Ohio, where they raise corn, beans, wheat and 700 head of hogs. Snyder also has grown triticale, hybrid rye and barley for a local malting facility in Cleveland.

Following careers as school teachers, the Snyders bought their farm in 1980. Ron also manages his father's former property down the road, where he experiments with a tester field before moving practices to his operation. He also experimented within his backyard garden and quickly noticed improvements.

Ron began incorporating soil health practices on his operation about 10 years ago. "There was a lot of experimentation in the first six or seven years," Ron said. "We started no-till, and I stuck with it years three and four - three was really rough, trying to get the soil to change over, but once it changed over and it started coming forward, it's been gangbusters ever since. All my acreages are no-till, everything is no-till."

"The living root is the key to the whole thing," Ron says. "Get something growing down in the ground; as it goes down in the ground, it loosens the soil and creates something that's in there. Quite honestly, let nature do it."

The Snyders don't have issues with erosion or runoff given their elevation. Ron began utilizing a roller crimper in 2018 and planted beans into six-foot standing rye. Since then, he's using significantly less inputs and notices his land is better armed against extreme weather events. "We had a two-inch rain in 20 minutes," he said. "I've never seen it rain so hard in my life. With that cover crop, it never hit the ground - it was hitting that rye cover. As it hit the rye cover, it dispersed and went down gently into the ground. There wasn't hardly any water pounding on the field."

As a result, Ron's able to get on his operation and plant earlier than his neighbors, even when the fields are saturated. "The living roots that were in that soil were holding me up. Any place else where the soil was tilled, it was so mush you couldn't get in there." Ron notices better water infiltration and less ponding



and is focused on increasing his soil's microbiology. "If that is your goal, drive to that goal, because that one is going to encompass every other one in getting your organic material up there."

View Ron's interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGBL7Dz6ROI>

**"We had a two-inch rain in 20 minutes. I've never seen it rain so hard in my life. With that cover crop, it never hit the ground - it was hitting that rye cover. As it hit the rye cover, it dispersed and went down gently into the ground. There wasn't hardly any water pounding on the field."**



# Portage River Watershed of Ohio

