

Salmon Falls Watershed of Idaho

FARM #4

Lance Griff has been farming full time with his dad in Twin Falls, Idaho, for 17 years. Lance is a third-generation farmer who came back to the farm in 2003 after graduating from college. The Griffs farm wheat, dry beans, alfalfa, corn and barley on 3,800 irrigated acres.

Lance originally entered the no-till and cover crop arenas around 2013 to improve the farm's water infiltration. He, like many farmers in his area, used a tillage tool called a dammer-diker to attempt to hold water in between the rows. However, that practice was far from perfect. "We started to see articles in newspapers and magazines that were talking about soil health and how to get better infiltration into the fields and into the soil," he said. "So, we started playing around with that. As we progressed, we started to see that if we used less tillage and we used cover crops and left a residue on the soil surface, then it would allow the water to infiltrate much better and build up our soil structure."

While water infiltration became a big benefit of these practices for Lance, it was not the only one. He sees a significant reduction in compaction and has found that he has far fewer weed problems. "I've also noticed that we've had fewer bug and insect problems - the plant has just been healthier and so we just haven't had nearly as many issues with that," he said.

"There were so many benefits to it," Lance said. "When we realized that we could use less passes across the field, then it all became economic. So, the economics were a huge part, especially because in farming it seems like margins are tighter and tighter every year." As time has gone on, Lance also feels confident saying he's seen some yield benefits associated with his healthier soils.

One of the biggest challenges Lance faced when starting his soil health journey was the lack of knowledge in his area. It was very difficult for him to get information about how the practices worked out for individuals in his area, so he had to hunt for information. "I think the biggest barrier was just lack of local knowledge," he said. "But the



internet and newspaper articles and things like that helped greatly. You can get online and find people's webinars and talks that they did at a no-till conference or things like that. That helped a lot."

Lance hopes everyone will give these practices a try. "Pick out something you want to try this year, whether it be small or large," he said. "Try a little bit that will not cause you to lose sleep and give it a try and see how it works. One way or another, you'll learn whether it worked or not and then you can tweak it from there."

View Lance's interview:

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

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