

# Upper White River Watershed of Indiana

## FARM #8

Rodney Rulon (far left) is a fourth-generation farmer in Arcadia, Indiana, and runs Rulon Enterprises LLC with his cousins Ken and Roy, along with Roy's sons, Nick and Neal. Together, they farm corn, soybeans and run a hog operation.

The Rulons have been no-tilling for over 30 years and utilizing cover crops for 20. "We had some people tell us about green manure crops," Rodney said. "We started talking to people and started out back then with doing some field tests: 80 acres here and there of oats and radish and things like that. And that kind of developed, and every year we liked what we saw." Rodney notes yield improvement, improved soil health and structure, increased organic matter, and better results from his no-till systems as a result of the incorporation of cover crops. "We kept expanding the acres and trying different mixes and [in 2019,] we had 5,400 acres of cover crops."

The family operation has worked with the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and their local NRCS field office for guidance on buffer strips, grass waterways, no-till, cover crops, tile drainage management and nutrient and manure management. "We're definitely conservation minded," Rodney says.

The family's decision to convert their operation to no-till came following decades of traditional tillage. "We just didn't like what we were seeing," Rodney said. Following months of heavy rainfall, "We were getting a lot of gullying and erosion. We talked to the soil and water [conservation] district people and NRCS, and we knew there had to be something that we could do that was better for the soil."

Following the many benefits the Rulons have noticed as a result of soil health management systems, the family has conducted outreach to help others learn how their operation could benefit as well. "We were able to have field days and share information back and forth," Rodney said. "For us, it's always been more of a learning opportunity than teaching. We get new people on our farm, have an opportunity to exchange information with them and see what they've seen on other farms and what works, and try and figure out how to implement those things on our farm."



"You've got to give it a try," Rodney advises farmers interested in implementing soil health practices. "There's a lot of people out there like myself that are willing to be mentors and answer questions and talk to you. I haven't been to an area of the country where I didn't find somebody that was able to make it work."

View Rodney's interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udu8gudsKdk>

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