

## No-Till Soil Health Workshop

Seaham Grange Farm workshop demonstrates the possibilities of the no-tillage farming methodology to the masses.

**Summary:** Seaham Grange Farm, Co. Durham, 05/04/18; on a brisk sunny spring morning overlooking the North Sea, the Wear Rivers Trust and their partners provided an overview ‘min-till’ farming and the associated benefits of converting to the method, both in cost to the farmer and in improving the environment.



**Details of the event:** John Speed (Frontier™) kicked off the morning providing a schedule of events to the 40 plus attendees. Presentations by Aiden Monaghan (SOYL™), Dave Purdy (John Deere™) and Clive Wood (Kings™) pertaining to ‘Increased Nutrient Efficiency’, ‘Benefits of No-Till Farming’ and ‘Cover Crop Utilization’ respectively, set the scene on the surface with regards to agri-chemical and nutrient losses. These narratives were followed by our own Steve Hudson who used the opportunity to highlight the risk to underlying groundwater sources that these chemicals pose through the Magnesian Limestone Rural Diffuse Project (MLRDP). The project seeks to provide advisory visits to farms that reside upon the Magnesian Limestone Aquifer and classified as ‘at risk’ of high surface water / groundwater connectivity. Several farms were selected with the aid of the Environment Agency’s Groundwater Vulnerability maps that utilise both the depth and type of superficial ground which retards water percolation down to groundwater. This in turn will allow identification of farmland where valuable nutrients can be retained in the topsoil and better utilised around the farm instead of being lost through percolation to groundwater or via runoff to rivers. This both will provide long term benefits to the farming business while protecting the environment.

The day was originally to end with a drilling demonstration, comparing 3 methods (conventional, Min Till & Direct Drill), however, the antecedent conditions were not beneficial to a successful demo.