

2018 TILLAGE SYSTEMS

Farmers are the original environmentalists and conservationists. In order to maintain a paying farm, they have long recognized soil and water as the foundation of a successful crop. To address the problem of highly erodible soil, many farmers have adopted no-till and other conservation practices as a major part of their farming operation. In response to a need for information regarding these conservation practices in the state, the Tennessee Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service began making estimates of these tillage systems in 1983 for soybeans, corn, and sorghum. Estimates of major tillage systems used on cotton were added in 1992 and on wheat in 1995. Sorghum estimates were discontinued in 2009.

Potential advantages for no-till or other conservation tillage practices are reduced labor costs, reduced soil compaction and erosion, and increased water infiltration.

No-till usage for the major crops in 2018 continued to be at its highest level ever recorded. Soybeans once again led the way with 85.1 percent of acreage dedicated to no-till. Cotton and corn followed respectively with 80.0 and 75.6 percent. Wheat no-till acres increased by 30,000 to 64.1 percent of the total crop tillage. Other conservation tillage practices accounted for 16.2 percent of the acreage seeded to the state's major crops. Double-cropped acreage for these crops totaled 11.3 percent for 2016. Conventional till declined accounting for only 4.0 percent of total planted acreage.

The Tennessee Field Office of the Eastern Mountain Region is a cooperative endeavor of the U. S. and Tennessee Departments of Agriculture, who have combined resources to provide a single source of official estimates for Tennessee agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



2018 Tennessee Tillage Systems

Soybeans
Corn
Cotton
Winter Wheat



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TILLAGE PRACTICES: BY CROP, TENNESSEE, 2013-2018¹

Crop	Year	Total Acres Planted	No-Till ²		Other Conservation Tillage ³		Conventional Till ⁴		Double-Cropped ⁵	
			Acres	% of Total ⁶	Acres	% of Total ⁶	Acres	% of Total ⁶	Acres	% of Total
Soybeans	2013	1,580,000	1,270,000	80.4	240,000	15.2	70,000	4.4	520,000	32.9
	2014	1,640,000	1,260,000	76.8	270,000	16.5	110,000	6.7	430,000	26.2
	2015	1,750,000	1,380,000	78.9	310,000	17.7	60,000	3.4	350,000	20.0
	2016	1,750,000	1,410,000	80.6	270,000	15.4	70,000	4.0	360,000	20.6
	2017	1,690,000	1,400,000	82.8	240,000	14.2	50,000	3.0	340,000	20.1
	2018	1,750,000	1,490,000	85.1	220,000	12.6	40,000	2.3	350,000	20.0
Corn	2013	890,000	650,000	73.0	190,000	21.3	50,000	5.6	25,000	2.8
	2014	920,000	650,000	70.7	220,000	23.9	50,000	5.4	30,000	3.3
	2015	780,000	590,000	75.6	160,000	20.5	30,000	3.8	25,000	3.2
	2016	870,000	660,000	75.9	180,000	20.7	30,000	3.4	20,000	2.3
	2017	750,000	570,000	76.0	150,000	20.0	30,000	4.0	15,000	2.0
	2018	780,000	590,000	75.6	160,000	20.5	30,000	3.8	20,000	2.6
Cotton	2013	250,000	170,000	68.0	60,000	24.0	20,000	8.0	0	0.0
	2014	275,000	200,000	72.7	60,000	21.8	15,000	5.5	0	0.0
	2015	155,000	110,000	71.0	40,000	25.8	5,000	3.2	0	0.0
	2016	245,000	180,000	73.5	55,000	22.4	10,000	4.1	0	0.0
	2017	345,000	270,000	78.3	65,000	18.8	10,000	2.9	0	0.0
	2018	350,000	280,000	80.0	60,000	17.1	10,000	2.9	0	0.0
Wheat ⁷	2013	640,000	330,000	51.6	180,000	28.1	130,000	20.3	----	----
	2014	530,000	270,000	50.9	180,000	34.0	80,000	15.1	----	----
	2015	455,000	290,000	63.7	115,000	25.8	50,000	11.2	----	----
	2016	440,000	260,000	59.1	120,000	27.3	60,000	13.6	----	----
	2017	370,000	220,000	59.5	100,000	27.0	50,000	13.5	----	----
	2018	390,000	250,000	64.1	90,000	23.1	50,000	12.8	----	----
Total	2013	3,360,000	2,420,000	72.0	670,000	19.9	270,000	8.0	545,000	16.2
	2014	3,365,000	2,380,000	70.7	730,000	21.7	255,000	7.6	460,000	13.7
	2015	3,140,000	2,370,000	75.5	625,000	19.9	145,000	4.6	375,000	11.9
	2016	3,305,000	2,510,000	75.9	625,000	18.9	170,000	5.1	380,000	11.5
	2017	3,155,000	2,460,000	78.0	555,000	17.6	140,000	4.4	355,000	11.3
	2018	3,270,000	2,610,000	79.8	530,000	16.2	130,000	4.0	370,000	11.3

¹2018 is a preliminary estimate.

²No-Till - A procedure whereby a crop is planted directly into a seedbed not tilled since harvest of a previous crop, or the planting of a crop into sod, previous crop stubble, or a cover where only the intermediate seed zone is disturbed.

³Other Conservation Tillage - Tillage practices prior to planting which result in a minimum of 30 percent ground cover or residue being retained on the surface following planting. Grass and weed control is accomplished primarily with herbicides; Includes ridge till, strip till, and mulch till.

⁴Conventional Till - Systems where 100 percent of the surface layer is mixed or inverted by plowing, power tilling, or multiple disking.

⁵Double-Cropped - Two crops harvested from the same field during one year. Example: small grain harvest spring 2018, followed by soybeans, corn or sorghum harvest in the fall of 2018.

⁶Sum of no-till, other conservation tillage and conventional till percents of total may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

⁷Wheat seeded the previous fall for all intended purposes including grain, cover, silage, hay, or any other utilization.