

1000 Foot Views Show Technotill Advantage

Getting a 1000 foot perspective on how crops are performing, gives North Battleford, Sask. area farmer and private pilot Alan Heidel a much better idea of how his crop management system is working.

Heidel who switched to the Technotill seeding system on his 41 foot airseeding system five years ago, says a weekly flight in his Piper Warrior PA28 over his fields throughout the growing season tells the story.

"I have been really impressed with how even the germination is over a whole field, from flat areas to the hill tops, and over different soil types and you can't always see that even walking the fields," says Heidel who crops about 2,200 acres of grains, oilseeds and pulse crops. "I use a narrow one-inch Bourgault opener so there is very little soil disturbance. I can run the opener shallow when there is good moisture, or deeper to reach moisture in dryer years and there is still just this one-quarter inch of packed soil on top of the seed. There is excellent seed to soil contact and very even germination."

Heidel says the system works equally well with all crops from wheat, to canola, to peas, to lentils, and to oats.

"We used to broadcast apply our canola just ahead of the seeding equipment,

which covered the seed, but I wasn't happy with germination. The Technotill system works extremely well."

And with the Technotill system, he likes the fact that fertilizer is placed just above and to the side of the seed row. He can place all fertilizer at time of seeding without risk of seedling injury, and especially in wet years he likes the fact the fertilizer is being moved down into the root zone, rather than being leached away below the roots.

With a direct seeding system, with very low disturbance, and by leaving crop residue on the field, Heidel says there has been a marked increase in soil organic matter particularly in areas of sandier soil.

"We've had some good growing conditions the last few years, but even with that I can tell crops are much more even, the fields are fuller with improved plant stands, and yields have increased," he says. "It is a very simple and efficient system that all helps the bottom line," says Heidel.

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