

## No-till dominates cropping systems on South Dakota cropland in 2017

No-till, a cropping system that protects the soil against erosion and aids in regeneration of topsoil, continued to be the dominant choice of cropping system of South Dakota producers in 2017.

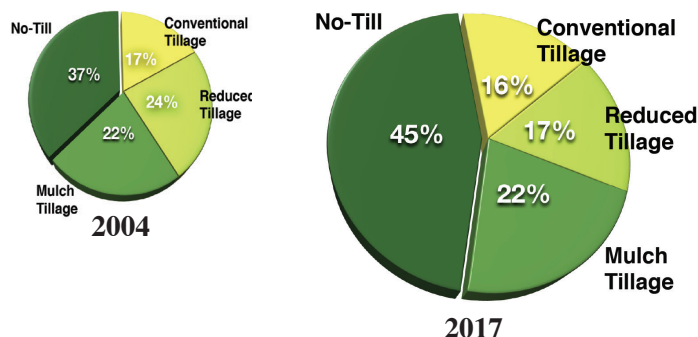
No-till planting acres were down one percent from the 2015 inventory, but at 45% outpace acres of mulch till by more than a 2 to 1 margin and conventional tillage by nearly a three to one margin.

A number of long-time no-till users in the state credited their no-till, along with crop rotations and cover crops, with saving their cash crops in the drought of 2017. The armor and undisturbed soil of a no-till system, along with superior water holding capacity from healthy soils built by no-till, cover crops and crop rotations, offered resilience in a very dry year.

NRCS employees and partners gathered information from more than 26,000 different fields across the state in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 for the latest inventory. This county-level, biennial “snapshot in time” delivers the most up to date information on crop management systems being used in South Dakota.

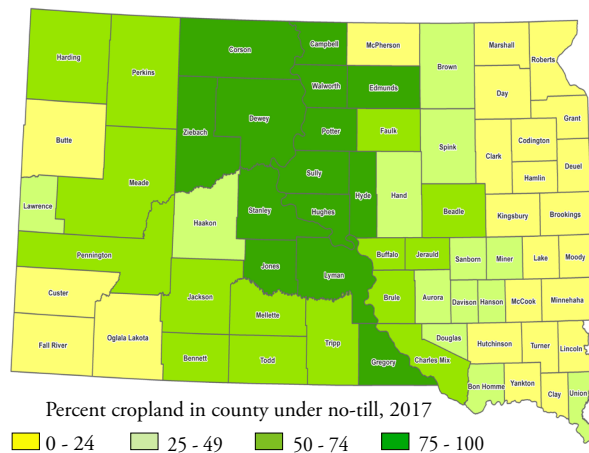


The percentage of no-till grew from 37% in 2004 to 45% in 2017, according to the NRCS Cropping Systems Inventory.



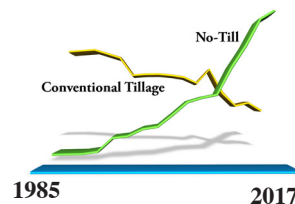
The greatest use of no-till continues to be in the band of counties through the central part of the state, a transition zone between the wetter east and the drier west. This transition zone has the greatest diversity of crops, too. Hard hit by the drought this past year, 14 counties have three-quarters or more of the cropland under no-till cropping systems. That compares to only four counties in 2004.

No-Till Strong in Central South Dakota in 2017



### Trend to Less Tillage

The trend in South Dakota has been towards more no-till with fewer acres of conventional tillage since 1985, when NRCS began tracking the systems.



## Cropping System Acres, South Dakota

	2004	2013	2015	2017
No-Till	4,873,352	6,229,856	6,475,903	6,190,063
Mulch Tillage	2,851,399	2,603,46	3,097,171	3,006,885
Reduced Tillage	3,165,728	2,665,327	2,393,269	2,408,289
Conventional Tillage	2,178,121	2,357,387	2,111,708	2,254,002

