PROJECT TITLE: Evaluating Strip Tillage to increase soil quality and improve profitability
REPORTING PERIOD: 2019
FARMER INNOVATOR: H & G Farms LLC, Harmon Wilts
COLLABORATING ORGANIZATION/PERSON: ETS Soil Warrior, Tanner Schultz
Centrol Crop Consulting, Dan Haubrich
John Deere, Tom Bouti and Ryan Peterson
Glacial Plains Coop, Shane Erickson

PHONE NUMBER: 320-894-5973
EMAIL: hgwilts92@gmail.com

1.) PROJECT ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. (*Describe project progress specific to goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in your project proposal.*)

Evaluated soil test needs by field. Established three fields with three tillage systems in each, along with fertility.
We established approximately 25 acres of Conventional tillage systems with fall applied dry fertilizer, approximately 25 acres of Strip tillage utilizing the coulter system with dry fertilizer applied in a band with the strip till machine. Established approximately 25 acres of strip till utilizing the knife system in each field. We will be applying the Nitrogen in the spring with the planter and the final pass with a side dress application in the summer of 2020. This is quite different, normally we applies all the nitrogen fertilizer in the fall as anhydrous. Fields look good and there are definitely differences. The strip till system is significantly different than we are used to seeing. Thank you MN Corn Growers for the grant to help us try this system.

2.) IDENTIFY ANY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND RESULTS OF THE PROJECT TO DATE. (*There may be none to report at some stages of the project*)

Definitely took some additional management to learn the new strip till tool and the newer tractor with RTK on both the tractor and strip till machine. Had great support/help from our partners in ETS and John Deere. Also a new learning curve of working with retailer to apply our own fertilizer with the strip till machine. At this time it feels very good and rewarding to have implemented this projects in our field. Really looking forward to more of this work and to plant and get the results next year.

3.) CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED. (*Describe any challenges that you encountered related to project progress specific to goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the project proposal.*)
We were able to get our fields project implemented in our soybean stubble going to corn next year in the 3 fields. After completing these fields, we want to add to the project and do additional fields of corn stalks going to soybeans. With almost 5 inches of rain in a week at the beginning of corn harvest we weren’t able to spend the time needed to complete the strip will in those fields. We will learn how to do this next year.

4.) EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES. (Describe any opportunities to engage with farmers, influencers or the media about your project.)

In our first year just establishing the fields we were still able to engage with farmers, partners and media. It was a great learning for our partners to work together with us to get the system established and learn what to do in the future. Main partners this summer and fall were, ETS, John Deere, Glacial Plains Coop, Centrol Crop Consulting, our farm team and the media. Most of the partners were slightly questioning the system and how would it work. They asked a lot of questions and in some cases had to work together with each other to be successful. We did have a very nice article/write up in the West Central Tribune new paper this fall. They want to follow up with future stories.

5.) HOW CAN WE HELP? (Please let us know how we can improve the experience or assist in your project if possible.)

Good questions, maybe have conference/meeting with you to show and explain the project to this point and to get any feedback from MN Corn. The other item would be go help connect us with other potential partners to help the project be successful.

Are there any other forms to fill out as we move forward.

Great big thank you for the grant without it we may have waited. As myself and our 3 daughters discuss we are really glad we moved forward on the project,