

# Tillage Radishes join cover-crop list

By J.T. SMITH

**T**ILLAGE Radishes could be your next cover crop.

In university trials, some parts of the country are reporting Tillage Radishes, by Green Tillage, increased corn yields by 10 to 20 bushels per acre, and raised soybean yields 7 to 9 bushels.

Steve Groff, partner at Green Tillage and CEO of Steve Groff Seeds LLC, is a veteran farmer who is impressed with Tillage Radishes, and uses them as a cover crop on his own farm at Holtwood, Pa.

"I am endlessly curious about new ways to improve my soil, which led me to investigate the use of cover crops," says Groff. "From research conducted on my own fields by Dr. Ray Weil, professor at the University of Maryland, we found that crop yields are higher in fields where Tillage Radishes were used as a cover crop."

Based on the success of the radishes, Groff eventually partnered with Leon Bird, CEO of Bird Hybrids LLC, to form Green Tillage to market and sell Tillage Radishes seed as a groundbreaking cover crop.

The radishes are grown in between cash crops to:

- reduce soil compaction
- suppress weeds
- recycle nutrients
- control erosion
- aerate the soil
- add organic matter

## Will it work in Texas?

But could the success seen in Pennsylvania be expected in Texas?

Groff can't see why the radishes wouldn't make a great cover crop in the Southwest. You just might have to tweak things a bit because of Texas' vastness and major climate differences.

For example, in his region, Groff suggests a rate of 8 pounds of Tillage Radishes seed per acre. The seed can be planted there in a broad window from Aug. 1 to Sept. 20. That makes the radishes timed well for winterkill, where they can then help enrich the soil ahead of spring planting of crops like corn and soybeans.

So winter hardiness can be an issue.

"The temperature needs to get down into the teens for good winterkill," Groff emphasizes.

Parts of Texas typically do get down into the teens during winter, but some areas commonly don't.

But Groff says in those warmer regions of Texas, either Roundup or 2,4-D herbicide will do an excellent job of killing the Tillage Radishes in substitution for extreme cold.

The radishes have done well as a cover crop in Alabama, a state with mild temperatures.

"We got increased yields in our cotton following the Tillage Radishes," says Tim Tucker, an Alabama cotton farmer.

The radishes are really big — commonly 3 inches wide and 7 to 10 inches deep — and roots run deep to help nutrient and water efficiency. Tillage Radishes can unlock tied-up nutrients

## Key Points

- Tillage Radishes are a relatively new cover crop to enrich soil.
- Higher corn and soybean yields have been reported in trials.
- The big radishes have potential to help other crops like cotton, too.

and make them available for the spring-planted crop, Groff notes.

Tillage Radishes also provide about 5 tons of organic matter per acre, dramatically improving soil quality.

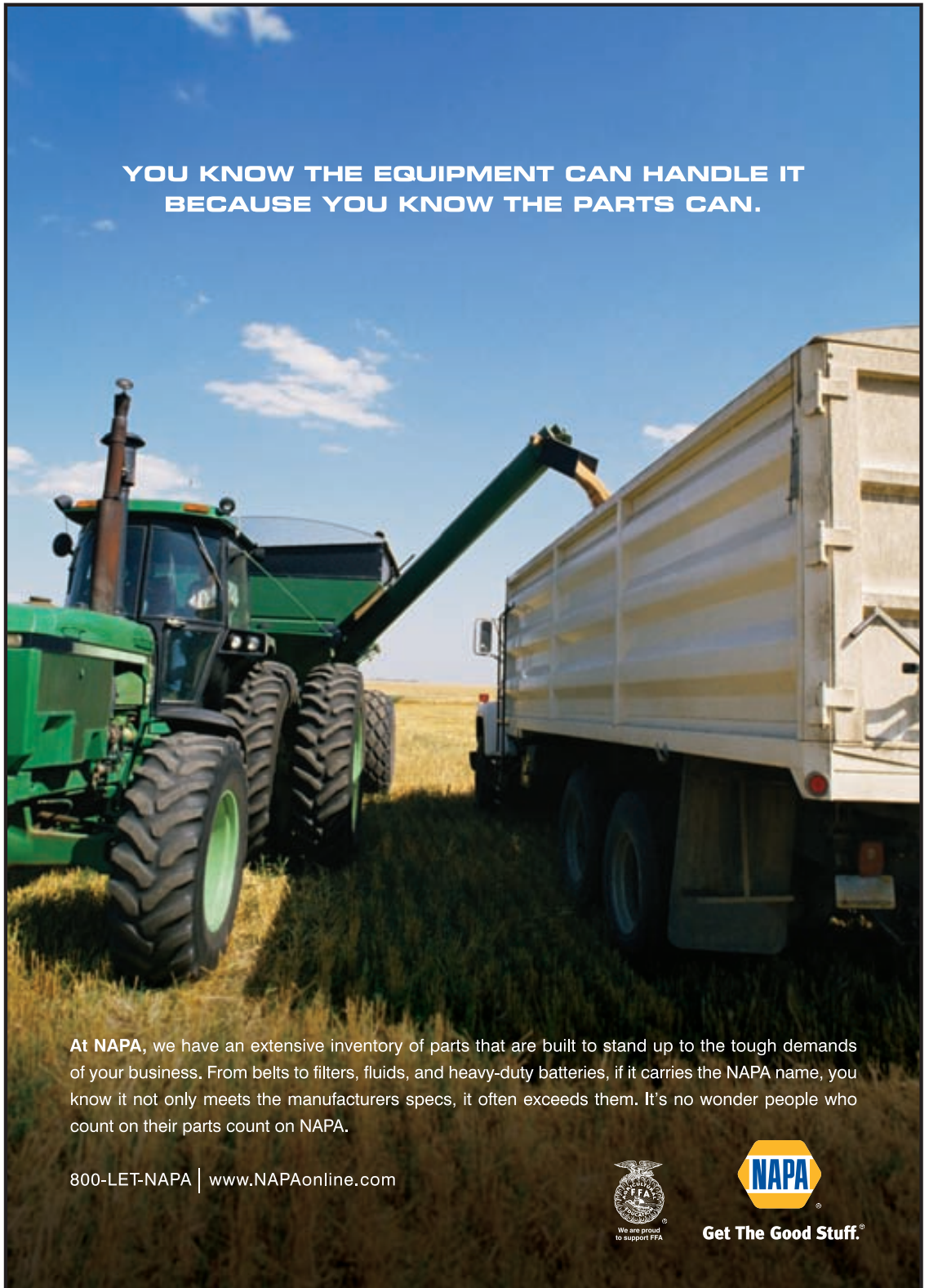
## Equipment needed

As for planting equipment, it might also vary in Texas, Groff says. On his own

farm, he prefers a drill to plant the radishes. But he says precision planters will work, too, as will broadcasting seed, aerial seeding or using sorghum plates, since the radish seed is similar in size.

Learn much more on the Web site at [www.tillageradish.com](http://www.tillageradish.com). Or contact Groff at 717-575-6778 or by e-mail at [steve@tillageradish.com](mailto:steve@tillageradish.com).

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