

## MINI TILL AS A FARMER DOES IT

by  
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Field preparation begins in early August following sweet corn or in this case, green peas. Before mid-July pea harvest, fertility samples were taken to avoid any delay of fertilizer application.

All the P, K, and B that would be needed for potatoes was applied before plowing. Only a small amount of N was applied because of leaching problems in this type of soil.

A heavy disking mixed in the fertilizer and mulched the green vines. A second disking was required to finish chopping in vines and to smooth ground left rough by the pea harvesters. The field was then irrigated and plowed. Using a large tractor, a seedbedmaker grain drill and packer pull after plowing. This can be done several ways, use what works best for you. Although we plowed the entire field before seeding, a better way may be to follow the plow across the field with the seedbedmaker set-up. This would avoid loss of moisture and save time. An irrigation was required after plowing in our method. Limited equipment forced us to do it this way. But, with overhead irrigation, it proved satisfactory.

After several weeks and irrigations, the spring wheat was knee high. At this stage there was plenty of cover to keep the ground from blowing. This brought us to mid-September when we began to fumigate. Again, several methods are at your disposal. We chose to use a heavy chisel plow with 12 inch duckfeet on 12 inch centers. This was pulled at depths from 12 inches to 14 inches. A large packer sealed the ground perfectly to avoid quick fumigation loss. All wheat was left laying flat on top of prepared seedbed.

In a few weeks the fumigation had killed most all cover. What the fumigation didn't kill the winter got. This is why a spring grain crop should be used to eliminate live cover at planting.

Seventy (70) lbs. of N was applied 2 inches below the seed with the planter. The remaining N the crop required was applied through the circle. Starting at 20 lbs./week at hooking, and adjust according to weekly data.

We have eliminated the spring blow problem doing it this way. Following this procedure we have minimized spring work. There has been no digging problems, not a bit of trash at harvest that normally isn't there. All equipment used was standard, with no modifications. Overall expenses were very little more if not less. Weed control was the same as we've used in the years past. The same goes for cultivating, the same as before with the exception of not having to recover at all. Irrigation was about the same, but one less early application because of ground cover. We are following the same procedures for the 78 crop and will continue to, until a better way has been proven.