Science Societies

Annual Meeting tours: Learn more about sustainable agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay region

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The Rodale Institute Tour at this year's Annual Meeting will begin with a welcome from CEO Jeff Moyer, who is renowned for the invention and development of the roller crimper.

Meeting in Baltimore offers our members an opportunity to tour and learn more about sustainable agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay region. The first tour will go where modern organic agriculture began, the Rodale Institute, near Kutztown, PA, and the second tour will showcase the pioneering use of cover crops in the delicate and endangered Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Rodale Institute Tour

On Sunday, 6 November, from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm, we will tour the Rodale Institute, which has been a leader in organic research, innovation, and promotion since 1947. Many of the sustainable concepts developed at Rodale have been adopted by not only organic growers but “conventional” farmers as well. The Rodale Institute aims to expand organic agriculture by:

1. Conducting research on organic farming methods and their impact.
2. Assisting farmers in successfully transitioning to regenerative organic systems.
3. Educating consumers on the benefits of organic for people and the planet.

These objectives are accomplished by its many research projects including: side-by-side comparison of organic and conventional farming practices that have expanded beyond yield and pest management to compare nutrient density of the finished crops. Environmental research is also a part of Rodale where a watershed impact trial is designed to show the connection between farming practices and clean water. Rodale is also on the cutting edge of industrial hemp research and its role as a cash and cover crop. The tour will begin with a welcome from CEO Jeff Moyer, who is renowned for the invention and development of the roller crimper that brought practical no-till production to organic agriculture. Afterward, we will hear about trials on farming systems, vegetable systems, industrial hemp, and orchard systems. After lunch, speakers will discuss Rodale’s education and communication programs.

The tour is sponsored by the ASA Land Management and Conservation Section and Agronomic Production Systems Section and the Agriculture Experiment Station Management Community. The cost is $120 ($140 after 3 October), which includes motorcoach transportation and lunch.

Cover Crop Tour of Maryland's Eastern Shore

The Chesapeake Bay is an important economic resource for the six-state area and Washington, DC that border it waters. However, since the 1950s, this important resource of oysters, crabs, and fish has been threatened from agricultural lands. The culprit is nitrogen and phosphorus runoff, which stimulates excessive plant growth in the bay, resulting in a loss of oxygen when it dies and begins decaying. The Cover Crop Tour of Maryland's Eastern Shore on Thursday, 10 November from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm will make a stop at the Wye Research and Education Center where much of the pioneering long-term cover crop trials have occurred. It will include a discussion on the history of cover cropping and incentive programs in Maryland. After lunch at Waterman's Crab House in Rock Hall, MD, the tour will include stops at two innovative farms—one a 13,000-ac grain farm and the other a certified organic grain and vegetable farm where participants can learn how cover crops play a critical role in the farm operations.

The tour is sponsored by the ASA Cover Crop Management Community. The cost is $110 ($130 after 3 October), which includes motorcoach transportation and lunch.

Visit **acsmeetings.org/tours-and-workshops** to learn more about or register for these tours and all 15+ professional tours and workshops available at the Annual Meeting in November.

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