

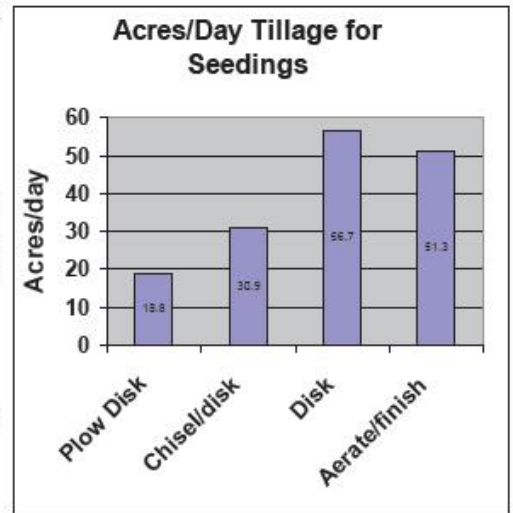
soil that is level, with fine crumbles for good seed soil contact, and few if any stones on the surface (see photo at right). We tested this on Matt Cannon's (518-852-1137) field in Pittstown, Rensselaer County. He had been doing what many farms do, simply lightly disk and then seed (actually the first time we tested disk/seeding was on his farm in the early 1980's). The alfalfa stand under disk/seed was as usual, very thick and had few if any weeds (when weeds are controlled in corn, shallow tillage does not bring up a new supply to affect the seeding). A nearby field was a moldboard plowed and seeded. This had a tremendous amount of weeds yet the alfalfa that was twice as tall. The disk pan in the first



field was limiting the alfalfa root growth until later in the season when rains softened the disk pan and the roots could get through. (Disk pans are a major limit in corn also). Aeration tillage has NO disk pan but the efficiency of disk/seed systems. Both Matt and Dan Requate (518-222-3750) of Schaghticoke, have been using aeration tillage for seedings for the past two years (photo at left). A major advantage both report is that few if any stones, in their very stony soil, are pushed up and many are pushed down or flush. This has greatly reduced stone picking. Both report very smooth fields. Matt indicated that if you have ruts or old dead furrows in the field the aerator will not take them out. It

will take more aggressive and expensive tillage for those spots. For fields that are smooth – they stay smooth.

Aeration tillage has the same speed of working the soil as one pass disk (graph at right) yet does NOT have a disk pan; does not have as many stones, and results in much better seedling root growth conditions. It also has a tremendous advantage as you are only working the surface which allows earlier seeding than conventional tillage. You can get 66% more work done in a day than you can with chisel plow/disk system and nearly 3X the work that a moldboard/disk system can accomplish. The added bonus is that the residue on the surface and the deeper porous soil allows more rainfall to be captured to feed the newly emerging seedlings.



**Watch for February Crop Soil News :Aeration Part II,
Control odor & save \$50/acre by incorporation of manure with aerator**

Sincerely,

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Hand
to Better
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