

The point of view on CA of a small farmer from southern Italy



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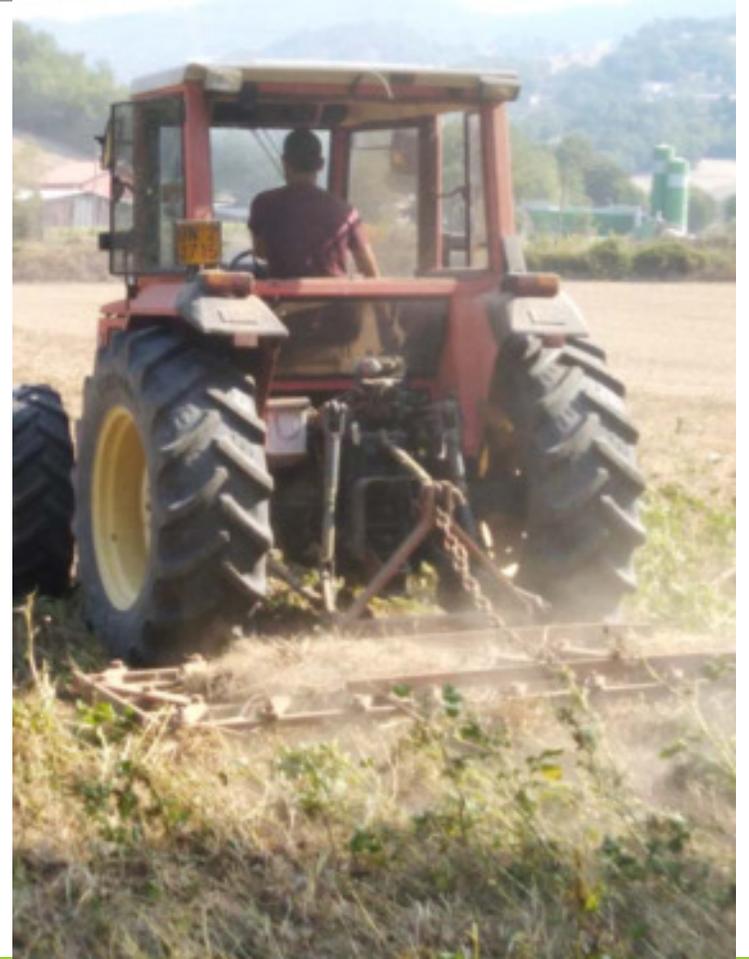
BENEVENTO,
MID-SOUTHERN ITALY

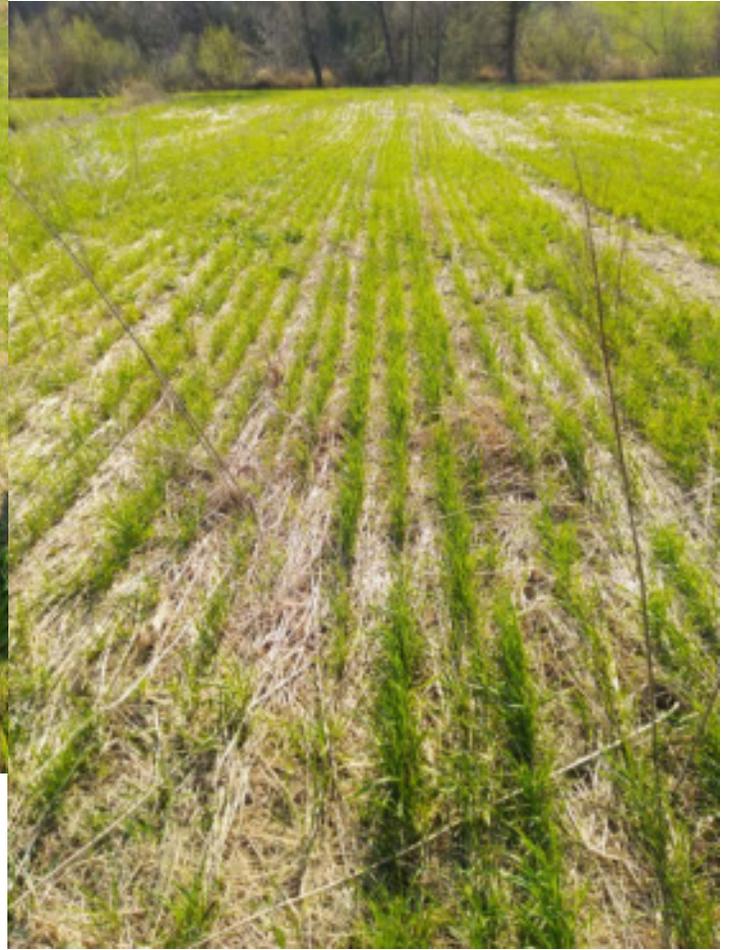
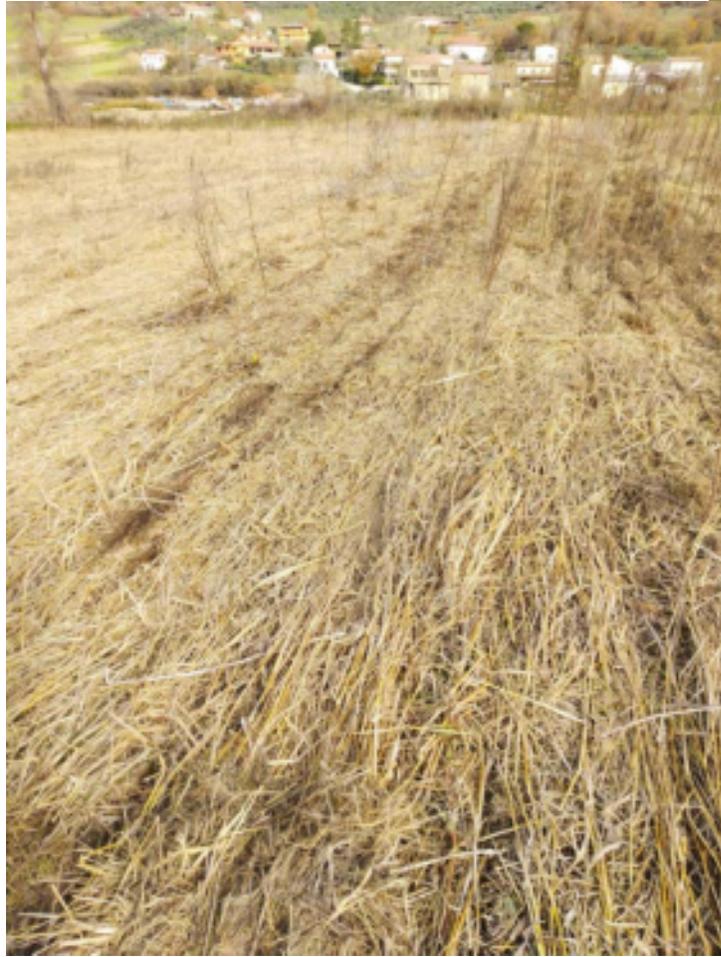


SMALL FARM ADOPTING CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE SINCE 2010

- MY FARM IS 8 HECTARES OF FRAGMENTED LAND
 - LOCATED IN A HILLY AREA, ON AVERAGE 500 METRES ABOVE SEA LEVEL
 - CULTIVATION OF WHEAT IN ROTATION WITH FORAGE (*SULLA CORONARIA*, CLOVER AND SOMETIMES OAT)
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- THE SOIL IS MEDIUM-TEXTURED, TENDING TO BE CLAY AND STONY
 - THE CLIMATE IS COLD IN WINTER, WARM AND DRY IN SUMMER







Technical and economic problems of conventional agriculture that led to the conversion in CA

- Too much labor, for the several steps of the process (ploughing, stones' removal, preparation of the seed bed, etc)
- Too expensive, especially because of the machines' fuel and the machines' deterioration

The CA technique

- **One step is enough for both sowing and fertilization**

Labor is concentrated in only two days per year for sowing. One day for cereals, another day for legumes.

- **For the sowing of legumes, in rotation with wheat, I use a fertilizer spreader and then a passage of a light harrow to cover the seeds.**

Benefits and problems of conversion

BENEFITS

- 1. Shorter time**
- 2. Lower cost**

PROBLEMS (I can spot just a couple of problems that can arise in practice)

- 1. I entrust NoTill drill operation to specialists contractors, but it is not always possible to have it at the appropriate time**
- 2. It is necessary to control weeds. I tried in organic, you can do it, but the yields can be reduced a lot, and the process more complicated.**

Practical tips for farmers

- **PATIENCE**

CA is a system that improves with time. In the early years there can be even a drop in yield. Then there is a progressive recovery, until it reaches the maximum of production, as before or even more after about 5 years.

- **FINDING INFORMATION AND UPDATING**

I recommend farmers to persevere and to join other farmers for an exchange of knowledge, to take advantage of technical advice, such as the ones offered by an association.

It helped me a lot to be a member of the "AIPAS No-Till" association. www.aipas.eu

Study trips to Argentina, Australia and France

In my opinion study trips are the most important and interesting way to learn about CA. They give the opportunity to see the fields and the practice and you can also take part in meetings and debates, with experienced farmers.

I joined in several study trips in Italy and also abroad.

1. I have been to Argentina in 2008. I then I came back there a second time in 2016.

In Argentina CA is highly developed, more than 90% of the land is cultivated with this system, especially soybean. Argentina is the world's largest soybean producer.

2. In 2014 and 2018 I was in Australia, where wheat is cultivated in rotation with legumes such as lentils and also canola.

3. In January 2016 I have been in France for a week where I appreciated the benefits of the advice system for CA farmers. The one in the photo is a lavender field.

ARGENTINA



AUSTRALIA



FRANCE

