

Grazing Cover Crops

Objective: Demonstrate the economic and soil health benefits of grazing multi-species cover crops, through partnerships between row crops farmers and graziers.

Farmer-cooperators, Wade and Alan Dooley will:

- **August/September 2015 & 2016**, plant multi-species cover crop into 40 acres of standing corn or soybeans. Leave 10 acres with no cover crop (control).
- **Fall 2015**, establish perimeter fence on treatment plot.
- Conduct and record weekly or bi-weekly brix measurements on cover crop forage production using a refractometer.
- **Fall 2015 & 2016**, graze cover crop if biomass growth and weather allow.
- **Spring 2016 & 2017**, graze cover crop if biomass growth and weather allow. After grazing, terminate with preferred method.
- Estimate and record amount of forage grazed by how many head of cattle.
- Document plots with photographs before and throughout the entire trial.
- Track costs, revenues and profits generated from the control and trial plots.
- Regularly note any observations of what is emerging on the trial plots.
- Host an annual field day.
- Turn in data to Practical Farmers of Iowa once per year.
- Permit the project team to share data about your experience.





Livestock Research Protocols

Practical Farmers of Iowa and the project team will:

- **Spring 2015**, take baseline soil health tests on control and treatment plots and provide you with results.
- Provide detailed protocols for the management of the demonstration site for field seasons 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.
- Monitor progress of project and provide support when needed.
- Provide cost share of no more than 50% to support the cost of fencing and seeding. Green Cover seed will provide \$750 in seed for both years; this money will reduce the total cost to both parties, and the remaining cost will be split 50:50. Total funds available per site are a one-time payment up to \$1,500 to cover fencing costs and up to \$1,500 per year to cover seeding costs. Funds can be shifted between these categories.
- Provide \$1,000 dollars per site to cover costs and compensate for time associated with holding field days.
- Publish results in a PFI research report, on PFI website and potentially other outlets
- **Fall 2017**, provide \$3,000 reimbursement at conclusion of project.