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The Practical  
**COVER  
CROPPER**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



**John Hopkins** of Polo, IL frost seeds clover into his winter wheat to get a head-start on clover growth. When the ground is frozen at night and thawing during the day—typically late March in northern Illinois—is the ideal timing, he says.

John uses a spinner-spreader to apply in one pass both urea for the wheat crop and 10 lbs/acre of inoculated medium red clover. By running the spinner-spreader in the early morning he avoids soil compaction, and when the ground thaws in the afternoon, the clover seed works its way into the soil.





The benefits of frost seeding clover into wheat are numerous for John: after he harvests wheat in July, he lets the clover re-grow for four to six weeks before wet baling it for his beef cattle. After mowing, John applies manure, and come mid-October once the clover has grown back he lets the cattle graze the clover.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### **IA farmers and landowners: Deadline to sign up for cover crop insurance discount extended to January 27**

The application deadline for the IDALS \$5 per acre crop insurance premium discount for acres cover cropped in fall 2020 has been extended to January 27. The cover crop acres cannot be enrolled in other state or federal cover crop cost share programs, but can be enrolled in private cost share programs, such as the PFI-administered programs. **[Don't miss out on this \\$5 per acre discount; apply by January 27!](#)**

### **Ready to try small grains plus bigger cover crops on your farm?**

**[Sign up for our small grain cost here](#)**, and get started with oats or spring wheat this March. \$15/acre is available for small grains harvested in 2021 followed by a legume-containing cover crop.

You can keep up-to-date with small grain technical and marketing information and cost share opportunities by **[subscribing to the monthly "Small Grains News."](#)** A host of existing resources are also archived on our **[Small Grains webpage](#)**.



### **Learn about carbon and ecosystem service markets**

Join the Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership, PFI and other partner organizations for a free webinar exploring different environmental and carbon market opportunities for Midwest farmers on February 12, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CST.

This event brings together Indigo Ag, Nori, Ecosystem Services Market Consortium, and the Soil and Water Outcomes Fund to provide a side-by-side comparison of opportunities. Presentations will cover program enrollment, highlighting key contract terms and conditions, payment schedules, and verification requirements.

[Register for the webinar here!](#)

## IN THE FIELD

### Blog: Fool proof frost seeding legumes in the small grains year

Learn about frost-seeding practices from Keota, IA farmer **Tim Sieren** and USDA-Agricultural Research Service technician **Keith Kohler**. In a 2018 shared learning call, they shared tips on timing, species recommendations, the utility of clover, and more. Read [the blog here](#).



### Research report: Nitrogen replacement value of red clover



What's the N credit from clover to the following corn crop? A few years ago **Tim Sieren** sought to answer that himself, so he conducted an on-farm research trial to estimate red clover's N credit.

Tim found that the corn following cereal rye crop with frost seeded red clover receiving 100 lb N/ac yielded the same as corn following rye alone which had received 143 and 190 lb N/ac. [The full research report can be found here](#).

### Blog: Clover cover crop management

If you have never worked with clover or, it has been a few years since your farm saw clover, it might help to brush up on best practices for clover establishment, management, termination and accounting for the N credit.

Last year, **Kevin Shelley** with UW-Extension, shared his experience with corn, soy, wheat/red clover rotations at research stations and on his own farm; [this blog summarizes](#).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Farminar: Interseeding 60-Inch Corn for Improved ROI**

*Hosted by:* Eric Miller & Practical Farmers

**January 26 | 7 – 8:30 p.m. CST | Online**

### **Webinar: Regenerative Carbon Neutral Beef Production**

*Hosted by:* Jason Rowntree & Soil Health Nexus

**January 27 | 2 p.m. CST | Online**

### **Webinar: Regenerative Ag, Bio-Diversity, & Pollinators**

*Hosted by:* Jonathan Lundgren & Green Cover Seed

**February 2 | 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. CST | Online**

### **Webinar: Short Term Perennial Pasture within a Cropping Rotation**

*Hosted by:* John Lloyd, Keith Thompson & Green Cover Seed

**February 9 | 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. CST | Online**

### **Nebraska Cover Crop & Soil Health Conference**

*Hosted by:* UNL Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center

**February 11 | 1 – 4:30 p.m. CST | Online & Several Locations**

### **Farming for the Future: Exploring Ecosystem Markets Forum**

*Hosted by:* Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership & Partners

**February 12 | 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CST | Online**

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Want to host a virtual cover crop happy hour? We'll help you with the tech, and how to virtually invite your neighbors to the discussion. Contact Sarah if interested [sarah@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:sarah@practicalfarmers.org)

Are you planning or hosting a cover crop event—virtual or in person? Send the details to [rebecca@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:rebecca@practicalfarmers.org), and we'll include it in our next newsletter.

## COVER CROP POLL

**Send us your cover crop poll ideas!** We want to know what YOU want to know, reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

What is your experience with clover as a cover crop?

**I saw it on the farm growing up but haven't planted it myself**

Select

**I raise clover now**

Select

**I don't raise clover, but I'm interested in raising it**

Select

**I'm not interested in growing it**

Select

### Previous poll results:

How likely are you to attend a local, small group meet up limited to less than 10?

- **Yes, if there's one nearby I'd attend - 47.1%**
- No, I'll stick to virtual events - **29.4%**
- Yes, but I'd prefer a larger public event - **17.6%**
- No, I'll only attend large (40+) public events in 2021 - **5.9%**

## CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

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STAY CONNECTED WITH PFI!

