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The Practical  
**COVER  
CROPPER**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



**Brian Kessel** of Lamoni, Iowa has been growing cereal rye for seed for over seven years, noting, "I can grow it a lot cheaper than I can purchase it."

**Drilling early:** Brian typically no-till drills immediately after he has harvested soybeans on the rye production fields. In 2021, he plans to drill his rye crop the last couple days of September. On a couple occasions, he has drilled as late as the first week of November, but he notes, "If you get it started by the first part of October, you typically get more growth, and better yields."

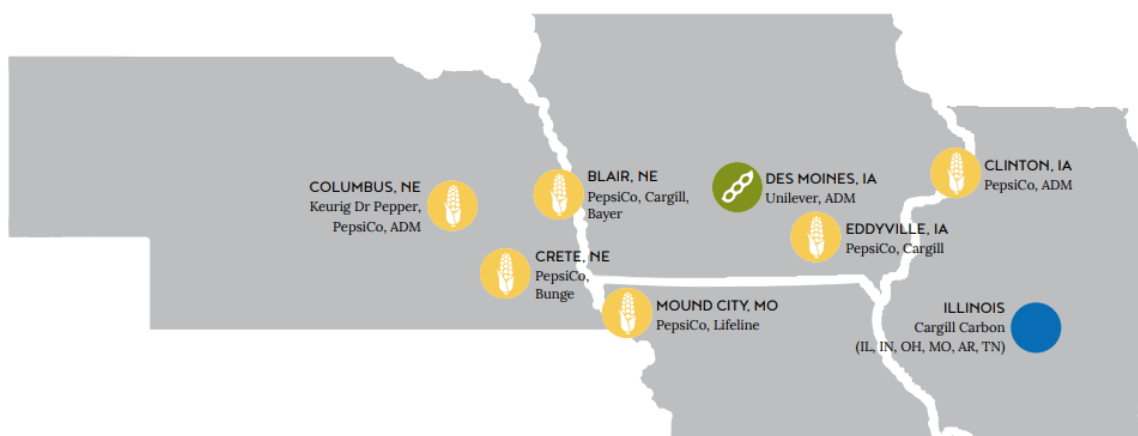
Brian drills on 7.5 inch centers at a ¾- 1 inch depth, depending on moisture conditions. He'll seed 90 lbs/acre rye on better fields and closer to 120 lbs/acre rye on poorer quality fields. Brian says, "The drill gives us a more consistent stand than broadcasting or flying it on."

**Choosing a variety:** Named cereal rye varieties have worked best on Brian's farm. "With named varieties, the crop heads out at more or less the same time, and you get a cleaner sample when you combine. With VNS, it can mature over the span of two to three weeks," he explains.

**Fertility and management:** Brian applies hog manure, chicken litter or variable rate P and K before seeding rye. If he applies synthetic fertilizer, he top-dresses 60# N in the form of AMS in the spring. He does not add synthetic N in the spring on manured fields. "We've had some lodged rye with too much nitrogen," says Brian, "And if a field has a lot of weed pressure, you might hit it with 2,4-D in the fall or spring."

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Expanded eligibility for PFI cost share



Over the past few years, we've expanded the geographies and market outlets that make people eligible for our private cover crop cost share. Even if you haven't been eligible in the past, you might be now! [Click on the grain icons at this link](#) to learn more about eligibility.

**We still have acres available for most cost share programs;** please share with neighbors and friends!

[Fill out the application](#)

### Thinking about raising your own rye seed? Sign up for \$15/acre small grain cost share!

Raising your own cereal rye seed has many advantages, and Practical Farmers will sweeten the pot with [cost share](#) at \$15 per acre on up to 200 acres. To be

eligible, you must harvest a small grain in 2022 (for grain or forage) and plant a summer cover crop containing at least one legume species.

Learn more about raising small grains, and stay in the loop with cost share opportunities by [subscribing to our monthly "Small Grains News" e-newsletter](#).



**Apply for small grain cost share today!**

## **Iowans: Get priority for NRCS RCPP funding by October 22**

Farmers and landowners in the following regions may be eligible for cover crop and other conservation cost share:

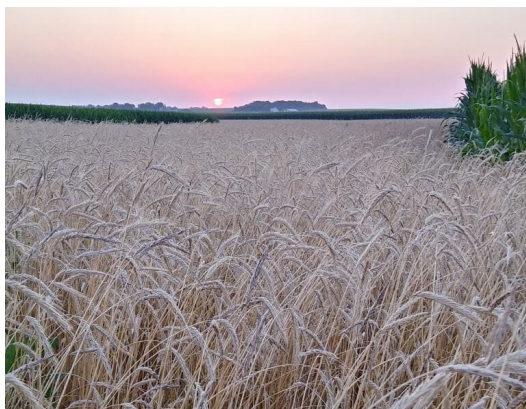
- [Turkey River Watershed](#)
- [North Raccoon River Watershed](#)
- [Des Moines Lobe and Iowan Surface landforms](#)
- [Several other watersheds](#)



Visit [your local NRCS office](#) to determine if you are eligible and apply for FY22 funding by Oct. 22!

## **IN THE FIELD**

### **Blog: Growing cereal rye for cover crop seed? Consider these 6 factors**



Raising quality, high-yielding rye seed in the Midwest is possible and even profitable!

[In this blog](#), review rye seed production tips from **Sam Bennett**, **Wade Dooley** and **Tim Sieren**. They provide insight on variety selection, seeding dates and rates, fertility, and more.

### **Video: Timing of cereal rye planting**





This year's earlier harvest enables timely planting of rye. **Wade Dooley** recommends drilling your rye crop in late Sept. or early Oct. to allow it to tiller and yield more in the spring.

Learn more about seeding dates in [this short video](#), and watch similar videos in our "[Small Grains Shorts](#)" series.

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## Picking a cereal rye variety

Growing a named cereal rye variety (as opposed to VNS) can result in more consistent stands and higher yields, but which variety will perform the best on your farm?

[Check out the preliminary results from our 2021 multi-site variety trials!](#)

If you opt for a named variety, and think you might sell it, keep an eye on PVP protection. It is illegal to sell a PVP-protected variety without certifying it first. Learn more about the legality of selling different rye varieties in [this blog](#).

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## Blog: Fall armyworms and winter small grain crops



Fall armyworms (FAW) are more active this year, and will feed on small grain foliage. [This blog](#) suggests seeding winter small grain crops after the [Hessian fly-free date in your region](#) to minimize the number of 65°F + days when FAW are active.

Insecticide is justified in small grain fields warranted only if the FAW are present after tillering has started. Insecticide for FAW is only economical when larvae is less than ¾" in length.

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## Video: Calculating seeding rate and calibrating a drill

Rye seed differs in size depending on the variety. For example, the varieties for our 2022 trial range from 12,830 to 22,670 seeds per pound. That's a big difference! To get to a target population of 1.1 million seeds per



acre, seeding rates may vary from 54 to 95 pounds per acre.

Curious how to calculate the seeding rate of your rye? [Check out this blog](#) for a how-to-guide.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*All times listed in CT.*

### **Webinar: Topic TBA**

*Hosted by:* Dean Eisenhauer & Iowa Learning Farms

**September 29 | Noon | Online**

### **"Catching Up" Field Day: Organic Rotations with Small Grains, Weed Management**

*Hosted by:* Daniel and David Rosmann & Practical Farmers

**September 29 | 10 a.m. - Noon | Shelby County, IA**

### **Field Day: Wetlands**

*Hosted by:* Upper Wapsipinicon WMA & Iowa Learning Farms

**September 29 | 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Coggon, IA**

### **Webinar: Topic TBA**

*Hosted by:* Reid Christianson & Iowa Learning Farms

**October 6 | Noon | Online**

### **Webinar: Topic TBA**

*Hosted by:* Jake Hansen & Iowa Learning Farms

**October 13 | Noon | Online**

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**Want to host a cover crop meet up?** Contact Sarah if interested

[\*\*sarah@practicalfarmers.org\*\*](mailto:sarah@practicalfarmers.org)

Are you planning or hosting a cover crop event? 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.

If raising rye for seed, what sort of variety do you typically plant?

Variety Not Stated (VNS)

Select

Named Variety with PVP (i.e ND Gardner, ND Dylan)

Select

Named Variety without PVP (i.e. Elbon, Aroostock)

Select

### Previous poll results:

If you drill cereal rye, what seeding rate do you use?

- **50 - 60 lb/acre - 48%**
- 40 - 50 lb/acre - **24%**
- 60+ lb/acre - **16%**
- Less than 40 lb/acre - **12%**

## CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

### Sarah Carlson

*Strategic Initiatives Director*

[sarah@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:sarah@practicalfarmers.org)

(515) 232-5661

### Chris Wilbeck

*Independent Contractor*

[chris@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:chris@practicalfarmers.org)

(515) 232-5661

### Rebecca Clay

*Strategic Initiatives Agronomy Coordinator*

[rebecca@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:rebecca@practicalfarmers.org)

(515) 232-5661

### STAY CONNECTED WITH PFI!

