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The Practical

COVER
CROPPER

May 2022

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Last year **Kevin Veenstra** of Grinnell, Iowa invested in a roller-crimper to terminate his cereal rye cover crop after planting soybeans on 300 acres. His first year of roller-crimping brought about success in reducing herbicide passes and lessons learned for future years.

Roller-crimp strategy: Kevin has terminated his cereal rye using chemical termination in the past. Now experimenting with roller crimping, Kevin seeds 90 lb cereal rye per acre in the fall. In Spring 2021, he crimped the rye just as it started to head out, 20 days after planting his soybeans.



Unfortunately, this roller-crimping attempt did not fully kill the rye and he still needed to spray. He notes, "I had to prioritize my soybean timing; if I plant a little later this year it might be better timing to crimp the rye. I'm still experimenting, and it would have been better if I'd been able to wait until later to plant."

Changing tactics: Kevin's goal with roller-crimping is to use less herbicide. Last year he eliminated one burndown herbicide pass, and looking forward, he would like the roller-crimper to serve as a substitute for burndown, entirely. "I only sprayed twice last year instead of three passes. In an ideal world I'd only spray once, about a month following crimping," says Kevin.

PROGRAM UPDATES

2022 PFI cover crop cost-share has no acre limit!

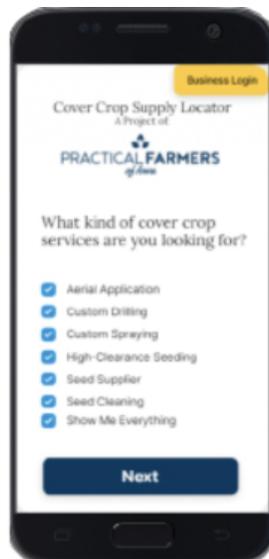


New in 2022: **[PFI cover crop cost-share programs](#)** provide \$10/acre for up to the larger of 200 acres or 10% of total acres farmed. This acre limit is doubled (400 acres) if you market to eligible corn AND soybean outlets.

Any acres seeded with cover crops beyond these limits can receive \$5/acre.

Not sure if you've already applied? Ask us at covercrops@practicalfarmers.org or simply apply again.

Find Cover Crops app



Stay connected in the cover cropping community through PFI's "Find Cover Crops" App!

Businesses that provide services from seeding to custom spraying or roller-crimping are listed in the "Find Cover Crops" app.

Do you have a service you would like to list? Sell cover crop seed? Reach customers through the app!

Find the app in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#) or use it in a [web browser!](#)

IN THE FIELD

Roller-crimping and seeding dates

In 2019, cooperator **Scott Shriver** conducted research to determine optimal soybean row-width and seeding dates when roller-crimping cereal rye.

Scott found that his soybeans planted the day of roller-crimping yielded higher than those planted 17 and 13



days before. [Read the full report and findings!](#)

Farminar: Three experiences with roller-crimping cover crops



Watch this [2017 Farminar](#) that highlights the roller-crimping experiences of organic farmers **Billy Sammons, Scott Shriver** and **Francis Thicke**.

Scott Shriver and Francis Thicke focus on cereal rye going into soybeans, and Billy Sammons shares his experience with hairy vetch going into corn.

Tips for successful rye termination



Check out this [guest blog](#) from **Dana Jokela**, as he walks through tips to successfully terminate cereal rye.

In the blog, he provides management tips like growth stage of the rye at termination and rye seeding date.

Video: Roller-crimper demonstration

Watch a roller-crimper demonstration from **Scott Shriver's** field day in August of 2018.

[In this video](#) Scott also shares his equipment experience and tips for getting into roller-crimping.



Additional resources

- Rodale Institute: [“Roller Crimper Blueprints”](#) to build your own roller crimper!
- Rodale Institute: [“Roller Crimper Helps Combat Herbicide Resistant Weeds”](#)
- Learn about in-row roller-crimping in this video: [“Keeping Dollars on the Farm by Using Rye for Weed Control in Soybean Production”](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events below are listed in central daylight time.

May 17: Workshop - [Crop Scout Training](#)

*Hosted by: UNL Extension
8:30 a.m. - 5:10 p.m. | Ithaca, NE*

May 19: Workshop - [Crop Scout School](#)

*Hosted by: ISU Extension and Outreach
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Cedar Rapids, IA*

May 25: Virtual Event - [Cover Crop Specialist Call](#)

*Hosted by: Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership
9 - 10 a.m. | Online*

May 26: Webinar - [Making Riparian Forest Buffers Work For You](#)

*Hosted by: Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation
10 - 11 a.m. | Online*

Stay tuned for PFI field days beginning in June!

The full field day schedule will be available on the [PFI website](#) soon.

Want to host a cover crop meet up? Are you planning or hosting a cover crop event? Contact taylor@practicalfarmers.org to plan something or to promote your event.

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.

Which is your primary motivation to roller-crimp your cover crop?

To reduce herbicide use

Select

To increase sunlight to the cash crop

Select

To improve weed control

Select

Other

Select

N/A I haven't tried roller crimping yet

Select

Previous poll results:

Do you plant green into cover crops?

- **Yes, whenever possible - 46.9%**
- Yes, but not as much as I could - 21.9%
- Haven't tried it yet, but might - 15.6%
- I've tried it; wasn't thrilled with the results - 12.5%
- I don't plan to try it - 3.1%

CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

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