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The Practical

COVER  
CROPPER

July 2022

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*

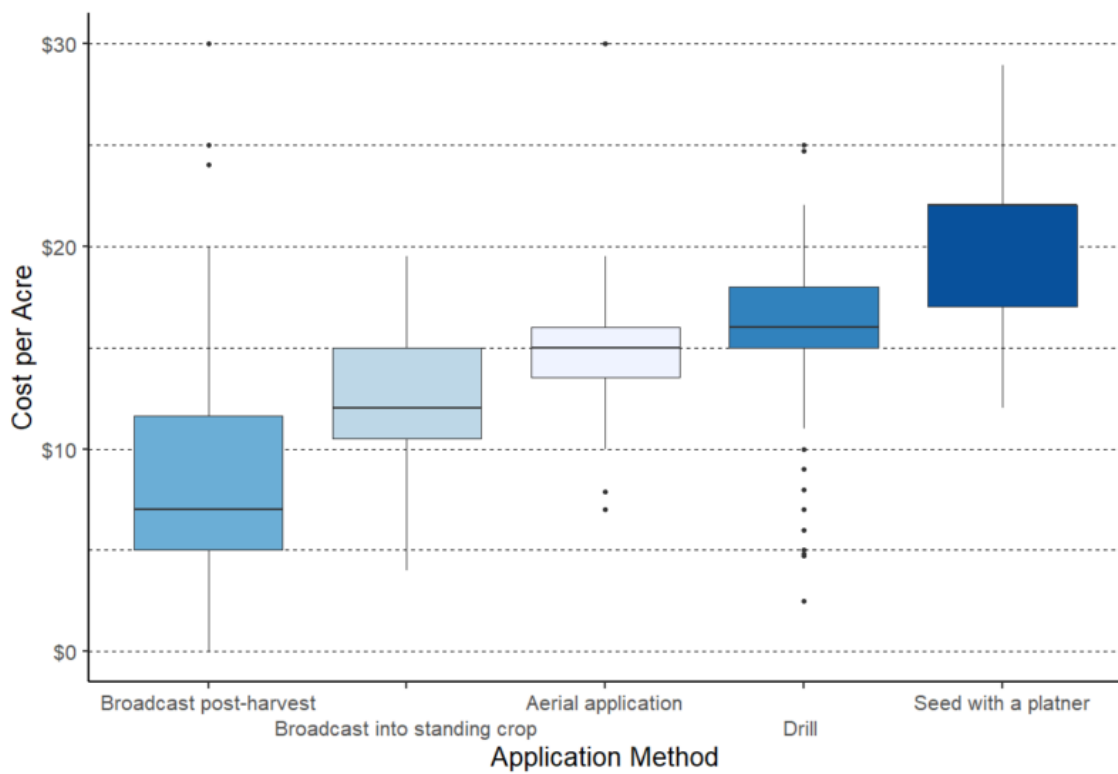
“Knee high by the Fourth of July” is not very applicable to the 21st century corn crop. As in-season management and genetics of our crops progress, so too must our out-of-season management. That’s right—we’re already thinking about fall cover crops!



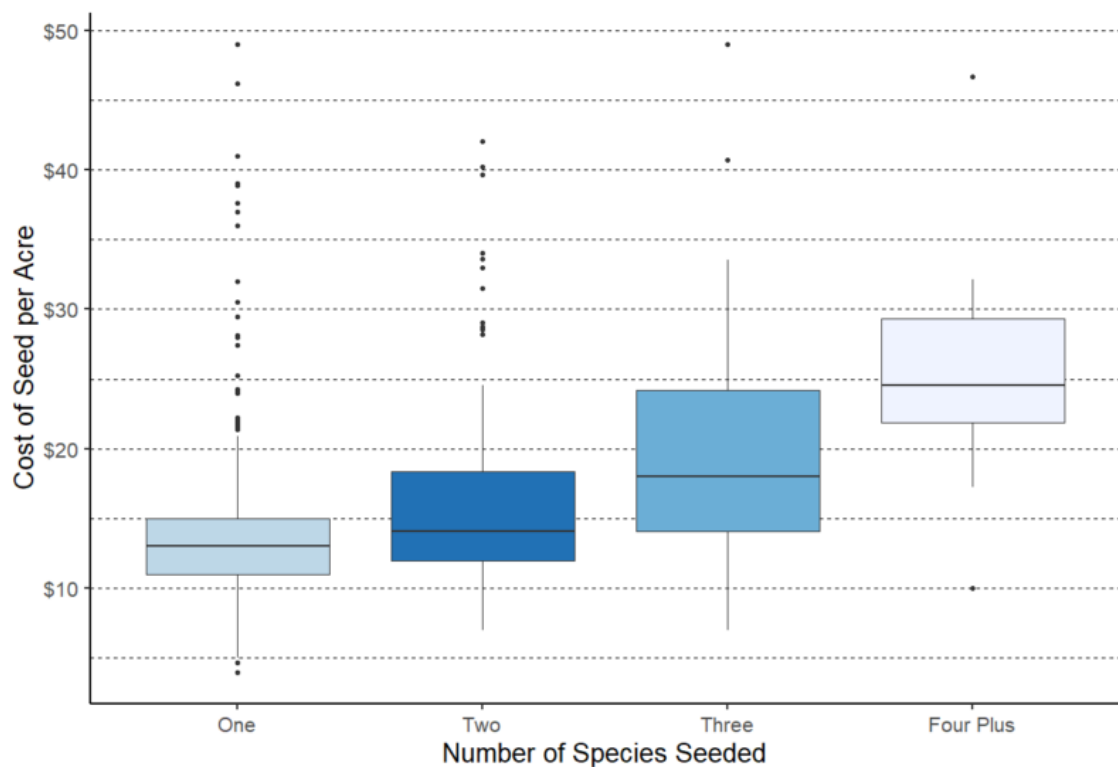
**Below we share findings and tips on cover crop expenses** from our

farmer-members as we plan for the next season of cover cropping. July is the perfect time to dial in your plans for seed and application.

**Tip #1: Align practices with goals.** While we hope the expenses of your cover crops are low, we know that sometimes the outcomes are worth the investment. For instance, the higher expense of seeding with a planter is likely justified if you’re using a **precision cover cropping-system**. If your goal is to protect against soil erosion or stimulate soil microbiology in the spring, broadcasting after harvest, especially with another input, is low cost, while also effective.

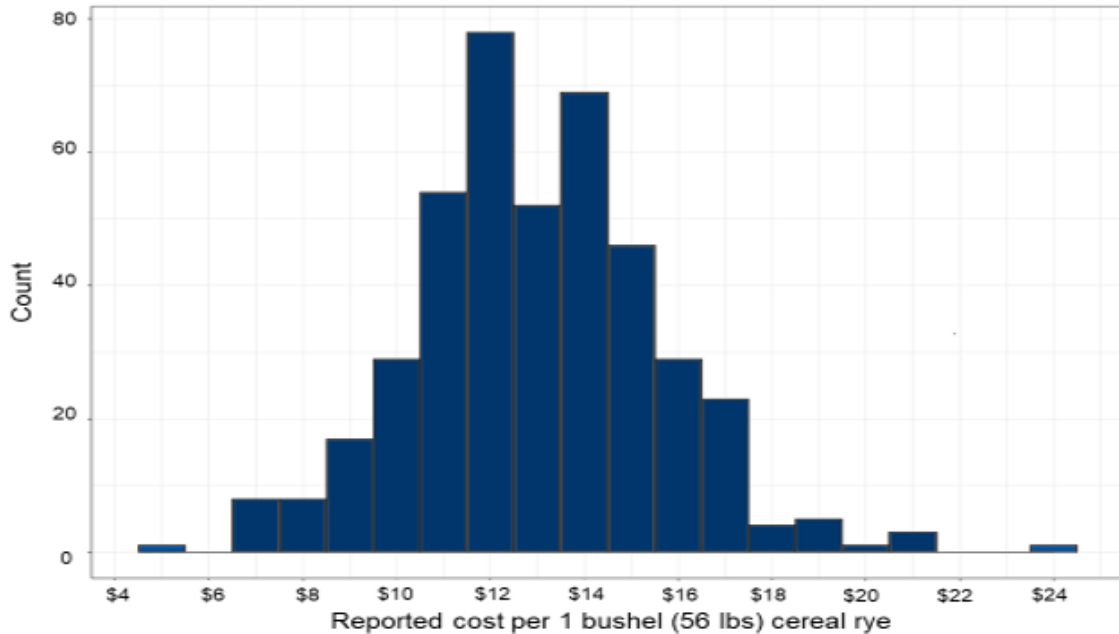


**Tip #2: Stick to a single species.** If your goals are soil conservation or weed suppression, one species will do the trick! If you plan to graze livestock in the fall, multiple species, especially across plant families, will likely pay off.



**Tip #3: Don't get swindled on cereal rye.** Cereal rye is the most commonly used species in the Midwest (over 50% of the cover crop iterations in our survey seeded straight cereal rye), and for good reason! It consistently overwinters and greens up in the spring before most everything else, plus it is affordable! Farmers use it in diverse ways: from applying it with a hi-boy at a half bushel/acre to drilling nearly three bushels/acre with plans to roller crimp.

The cost per bushel also varies; see the distribution of cereal rye prices below.



**A bonus idea: Grow your own seed!** 13.3% of respondents grew at least some of their own seed (saving them money), while reducing weed pressure, enabling biologically fixed N with a legume cover and increasing cash crop yields.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### PFI 2022 cost-share more widely available!

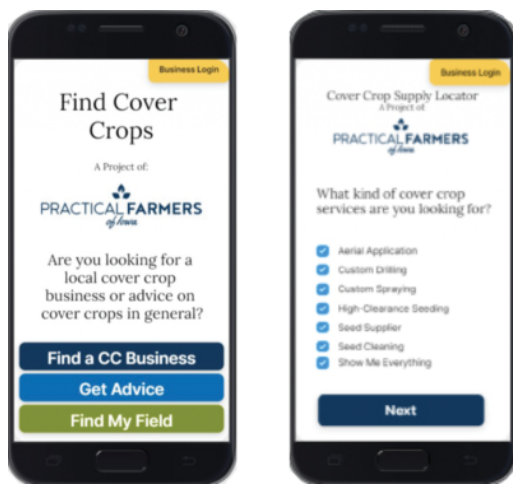


Have you applied for cost-share in the past and been declined? Trying covers for the first time? Eligibility has expanded!

For each PFI cost-share contract, you receive \$10 per acre on up to 200 acres or 10% of your farmed acres (whichever is larger) and \$5 per acre on everything above that. There are no requirements on the species or seeding method used.

Apply today!

**Do you have your seed and applicator lined up for this fall?**

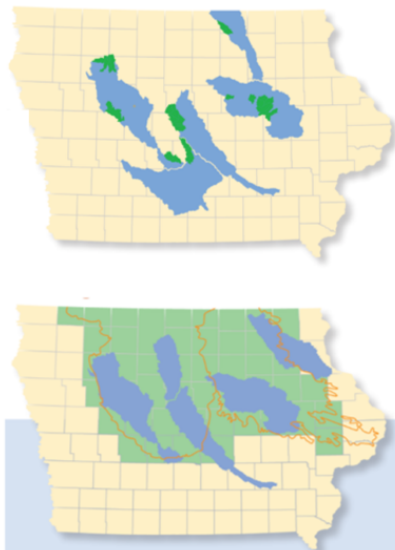


Whether you're new to cover crops or just curious to see what is available, the app "**Find Cover Crops**" is for you!

Search for seed suppliers, applicators and more by location in the app. Find it in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#) or use it in a [web browser!](#)

Do you have a service you would like to list? Sell cover crop seed? You can reach customers through the app too!

## Cost-share for RCPP throughout Iowa



**If you farm in any of the shaded watersheds or landforms**, you are likely eligible for RCPP cost-share (which can be stacked on PFI cost share).

[Contact your local NRCS office](#) to learn more for 2023!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Attend the 9th Annual National Strip-Tillage Conference



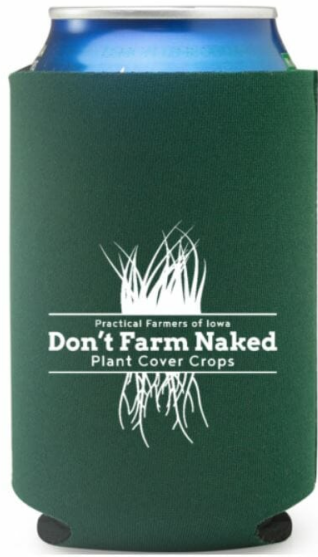
**July 28-29 | Iowa City, IA**

Register to attend the [9th Annual National Strip-Tillage Conference!](#)

**PFI members receive a \$50 discount** on registration fees! When registering, enter "PFI" in the Promo Code box before checkout.

This event doesn't come to Iowa often, so be sure to stop by and say hello to PFI staff while you're there.

## Come hang out with PFI staff at the Farm Progress Show



August 30-September 1 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Boone, IA

Mark your calendars to [visit PFI at the Farm Progress Show!](#)

**Stop by PFI's booth** (#9515 in the Varied Industries tent) to chat cover crops and **grab a "Don't Farm Naked" koozie!**

Note: Tickets must be purchased to enter the show. Visit [farmprogressshow.com](http://farmprogressshow.com) for more information.

*All events below are listed in central daylight time.*

### **July 7: Field Day - Oat Production: From Variety Selection and Seeding to Baling and Cleaning**

*Hosted by: Dan & Susan Voss, Brian Voss & Nicole Hepker | Practical Farmers*  
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Palo, IA

### **July 15: Field Day - Conservation Rotations and Cover Crops Following Small Grains**

*Hosted by: Andy Linder & Don Linder | Practical Farmers*  
10 a.m. - Noon | Easton, MN

### **July 16: Field Day - Precision Farming with Cover Crops for Soil Health and Conservation**

*Hosted by: The Wisecup Family | Practical Farmers*  
10 a.m. - Noon | Missouri Valley, IA

### **July 23: Field Day - Conservation Practices in an Organic Farming System**

*Hosted by: Sara & Bob Pearson | Practical Farmers*  
4 - 6:30 p.m. | Wesley, IA

### **July 30: Field Day - Cover Crops, Cattle and Conservation Projects Supporting Biodiversity**

*Hosted by: John & Cindi Van Horn | Practical Farmers*  
10 a.m. - 1 p.m. | Glidden, IA

### **August 2: Field Day - Weed Control Strategies in Organic Corn and Soybeans with Buffalo Cultivators and Planters**

*Hosted by: Ron Rosmann and Family & Eric Madsen | Practical Farmers*  
1 - 4 p.m. | Harlan, IA

### **August 3: Field Day - Whole-Farm Conservation Demonstration**

*Hosted by: Ann Smeltzer Charitable Trust | Practical Farmers*  
5 - 8 p.m. | Otho, IA

### **August 4: Field Day- Linking Cover Crops, Cattle and Neighbors**

*Hosted by: Justin & Ellen Rahn | Practical Farmers*  
10 a.m.- Noon | Mount Carroll, IL

Want to host a cover crop meet up? Are you planning or hosting a cover crop event? Contact [taylor@practicalfarmers.org](mailto: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.

How do you think your cereal rye price will compare to last year's price?

**The price is higher in 2022**

Select

**The price is similar or lower in 2022**

Select

**I grow my own cereal rye**

Select

**I did not use cereal rye last year or will not this year**

Select

### Previous poll results:

What is your predominant cover crop species before corn?

- **Cereal rye (60%)**
- Clover, vetch, etc. (16%)
- Radish, turnip, rapeseed, etc. (12%)
- I don't use covers ahead of corn (8%)
- Oats (4%)
- Camelina (0%)

## CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

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STAY CONNECTED WITH PFI!

