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The Practical

**COVER  
CROPPER**

October 2022

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



**Lisa Kubik** farms with her family in Traer, Iowa, where they grow corn, soybeans, and cereal rye for ryelage, as well as raise Kiko goats and 100 head commercial cow-calf herd. In the fall, the Kubiks' cattle graze 60 acres of their cereal rye cover crop.

**Drilling vs. aerial application:** When seeding covers to graze in the fall, their methods include aerial seeding and drilling after corn silage or soybeans. "We prefer drilling, but we can get in a lot earlier with aerial," says Lisa. "Drilling is a more reliable method to achieve a good stand, and it works better the earlier you can get it planted, but aerial seeding guarantees early planting."

**When they graze:** Their cows come off of pastures in late October or early November, and are turned out on the cover crops to graze for 2-3 weeks. During this period the only supplemental feed they receive is a protein tub.

**Value of grazing covers:** Lisa hasn't crunched the numbers on the feed value of their cover crops, but she definitely sees value in the 2-3 weeks of additional grazing for 100 head. The cattle reap the benefit of grazing a protein-rich green cover alongside the corn stalks and bean stubble. Lisa adds that some

value is hard to put a number on, “some of the benefits we see are improved soil health, reduced erosion and reduced compaction from the cattle, which isn’t necessarily quantifiable.”

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Have you applied for PFI’s cover crop cost-share yet?



Practical Farmers of Iowa’s cover crop cost-share can be stacked on publicly funded cover crop cost-share such as EQIP, or the \$5/acre cover crop insurance premium discount!

Farmers in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, and parts of South Dakota and Missouri are likely eligible!

**[Apply here today](#)** or **call the PFI office to learn more and apply: (515) 232-5661**

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### Deadline Oct. 7: NRCS conservation funding



**[Apply through Oct. 7](#)** for conservation program funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Submit applications through your **[local NRCS office](#)** to make sure you are considered for funding for next year!

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### Reduce your nitrogen input with PFI's Fertilizer-Yield Warranty Program

With input costs rising and cutting into your farm’s profits, it’s time to look at reducing your reliance on purchased inputs.

With support from our staff and a yield-warranty, PFI can help you reduce nitrogen applications on your farm – saving you money and increasing your farm’s resiliency.

Farmers who are new to cutting purchased inputs and farmers who’ve reduced nitrogen previously are both **[eligible for our program](#)**.



## IN THE FIELD

### Article: Grazing Covers Yields Green



Revisit this [magazine article](#) from 2021 that highlights the economic value of grazing cover crops from different farmer perspectives.

Learn about different cover crop mixes for grazing cattle, contract grazing and more.

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### Midwest Grazing Exchange



Do you have covers but no grazing animals?

[The Midwest Grazing Exchange](#) enables you to connect with someone who has grazing animals to increase nutrient cycling on your farm!

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### Research report: Economic and Soil Health Impact of Grazing Cover Crops

This [2020 research report](#) shares findings from six PFI cooperators about the economic return farms are able to glean from grazing cover crops.



**Profits averaged \$76.48/ac from grazing cover crops!** Farmers were able to see economic benefits in one year's time.

## Additional resources

- [PFI's Grazing Cover Crops Toolkit](#)
- [PFI's Grazing Cover Crops Research Highlights](#)
- [Wallace Center Grazing Tutorials](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

**October 12: Webinar - [Stewards of the Land](#)**

*Hosted by: Soil Regen & Loran Steinlage*  
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

**October 20: Virtual Field Day - [Exploring a Pumped Bioreactor System for Improved Water Quality](#)**

*Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms*  
1-2 p.m. | Online

**October 12: Webinar - [Iowa Learning Farms Webinar](#)**

*Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Laura Alt*  
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

**October 26: Webinar - [Iowa Learning Farms Webinar](#)**

*Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Matt Nowatzke*  
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

**October 19: Webinar - [Iowa Learning Farms Webinar](#)**

*Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Prashant Jha*  
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

**October 26: Webinar - [Cover Crop Specialist Call](#)**

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

[View more events on our calendar](#)

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

Would you ever consider contract grazing on your cover crops?

**Yes, I already contract graze my cover crop acres**

Select

**Yes, I'd consider but haven't tried it yet**

Select

**I'm interested but I don't have fencing**

Select

**No, I graze my own acres and need all the forage I can get**

Select

**No, I'm not interested**

Select

### Previous poll results:

Which of these session topics for the PFI Annual Conference sound the most interesting to you?

- **Cover crops and herbicide carryover - 43.5%**
- Cover crop seeding and equipment - 21.7%
- On-farm composting - 26.1%
- Flame weeding - 8.7%

## CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

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STAY CONNECTED WITH PFI!

