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The Practical

COVER  
CROPPER

November 2022

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*

**Graham Christensen** farms with his family near Omaha, Nebraska, where they grow 800 acres of non-GMO corn and soybeans, and are experimenting with contract grazing their cover crops. They have grown non-GMO corn for almost 15 years and non-GMO soybeans for the last two years.



**The business case for non-GMO:** Raising non-GMO crops has been financially advantageous for the Christensens. "We pay less in seed and are seeing a premium on our product in the marketplace," says Graham.



**Learning curve:** While non-GMO corn has been relatively similar to GM- corn varieties in terms of yield, productivity and weed control, they are re-learning what works best for soybeans. Soybean yields have remained steady, but weed pressure is heavier, specifically from ragweed and pigweed.

**Covers critical for weed control:** Planting early is key to growing enough biomass for weed control and grazing. Most of their grazing acres were aerially-seeded on Sept. 9 with 38 lb/ac of rye and 1 lb/ac of turnips and clover. "We will compare seeding options for cover crops and in the future will explore if crimping is a viable option to increase weed control" says Graham.

**PROGRAM UPDATES**

**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.

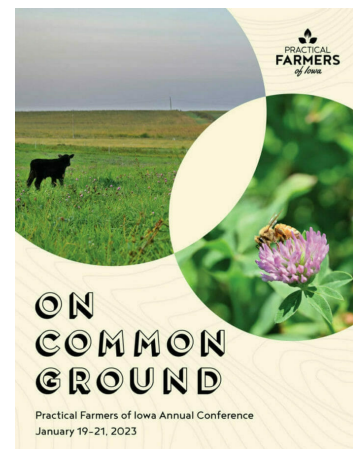
Farmers who are new to cutting purchased inputs, and farmers who've reduced nitrogen previously, are both [eligible for our program.](#)

## Save the date for PFI's annual conference!

Mark your calendars for Jan. 19-21 for our 2023 annual conference!

This year's annual conference explores the ways we are all On Common Ground.

The conference invites attendees to think about where we can find this common ground, and the ways we can make space for it through connection, conversation and recognition of our shared impacts and interests.



More details, including sessions and speakers [coming in November.](#)

## IN THE FIELD

### New research report: Cereal Rye and Triticale Variety Trial 2022

The [2022 cereal rye variety trial](#) released in October includes 11 cereal rye varieties and one variety of triticale.

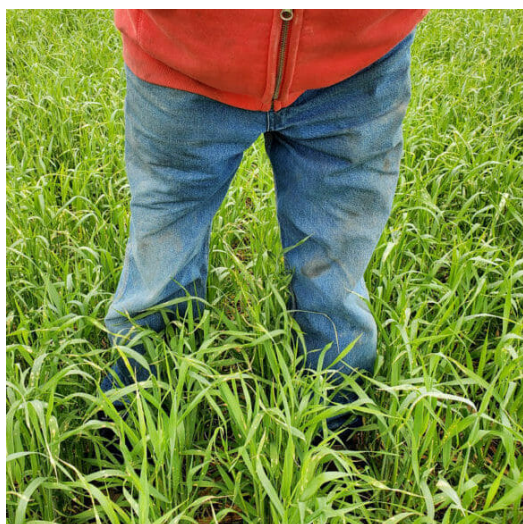
This research report looks into yield, germination and production specifics for hybrid and open-pollinated varieties of rye and triticale. The



average cereal rye yield across all sites 81.3 bu/ac.

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## New research report: Nitrogen Fertilizer Effect on Cereal Rye Yield and Quality



Read the [latest research report](#) highlighting research conducted by cooperator, **Dick Sloan**. He conducted a trial to learn if applying N fertilizer to cereal rye would improve yield and quality of the harvested seed.

He compared two fertilizer treatments: a fall and spring split application and a spring application. Results show no effect on yield with an average yield of 46.8 bu/ac.

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## Blog: Corn and soybean selection in extended rotations



[This 2019 blog](#) assesses the value of different corn and soybean seed traits in extended rotation systems.

While this blog is geared towards extended rotation growers, reviewing the value of certain corn and soybean traits like short-maturity varieties and non-GMO seeds are still advantageous from a cover crop grower perspective.

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**Additional resources**

- [Research: Accommodating Cover Crops with Early Maturing Corn and Soybeans](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

All events below are listed in central daylight time.

### Friends of PFI cover crop events

**Nov. 15: Field Day - [Cover Crop Field Day](#)**

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & John Kielkopf  
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Fremont, IA

**Nov. 18: Field Day - [Get Covered to Cover Crop](#)**

Hosted by: Iowa Farmers Union  
11 a.m.-1 p.m. | Jefferson, IA  
**\*\*\*Visit PFI staff at this event!\*\*\***

**Nov. 20-21: Conference - [Iowa Organic Conference](#)**

Hosted by: The Iowa State University Organic Agriculture Program  
Iowa City, IA  
**\*\*\*Visit PFI staff at this event!\*\*\***

**Nov. 22: Field Day - [Wetland and Cover Crop Field Day](#)**

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Denny Lyle  
Noon-2 p.m. | Keota, IA

**Nov. 29: Field Day - [No-till and Cover Crop Field Day](#)**

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Randy Caviness  
Noon-2 p.m. | Greenfield, IA

**Nov. 30 - Dec. 1: Conference - [Integrated Crop Management Conference](#)**

Hosted by: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach  
Ames, IA

**Dec. 5-6: Conference - [The Big Soil Health Event](#)**

Hosted by: Soil Regen  
Cedar Falls, IA

**Dec. 15-16: Conference - [Soil Health Management Summit](#)**

Hosted by: University of Minnesota Extension  
St. Cloud, MN

[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.

What percent of your crop acres will be seeded with cover crops this fall?

**100% and done!**

Select

Will be 100%

Select

50-100%

Select

1-50%

Select

No cover crops this year

Select

## Previous poll results:

Would you ever consider contract grazing on your cover crops?

- **I'm interested but I don't have fencing - 37%**
- No, I graze my own acres and need all the forage I can get - 22.2%
- Yes, I'd consider but haven't tried it yet - 18.5%
- Yes, I already contract graze my cover crops - 11.1%
- No, I'm not interested - 11.1%

## CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

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