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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

The Practical

**COVER
CROPPER**

December 2022

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Don Ryan farms with his family near Marengo, Iowa, where they raise a cow-calf herd and grow alfalfa, corn, soybeans and pasture. Don plants and grazes rye on a majority of his acres and the last three years has planted 50-60 acres of a winter wheat cover crop ahead of corn.

Why Winter Wheat? The goal for Don is to protect the soil from wind and water erosion but have less biomass to terminate in the spring than with the rye. He likes winter wheat because it has less growth compared to rye and is not as vigorous. Don feels he has a wider window of opportunity for burndown in the spring with winter wheat and less yield drag compared to rye.



Don with his son, Greg, and grandson, Gavin (left). Winter wheat cover with frost nip (right).

This Fall: "This year we planted around the 20th of October and we are starting to see growth after some of the warmer weather. We planted at the second most shallow setting, at half an inch depth or less due to soil dryness."

What to expect: Don hasn't had any issues with the winter wheat overwintering but warns that it isn't great for pasture. "Don't expect a lot of growth. You might get a little in the winter and a little in the spring, but not like the rye."

PROGRAM UPDATES

PFI welcomes Chelsea and Morgan as field crops viability coordinators



Meet Chelsea Ferrie (left) and Morgan Jennings (right), PFI's new field crops viability coordinators.

Chelsea and Morgan will provide additional support for PFI's growing cost-share programs, including our new Fertilizer Yield Warranty program.

Read more about [Chelsea](#) and [Morgan](#) on our [website!](#)

Reminder: Enroll in PFI's Fertilizer Yield Warranty program!



With rising input costs cutting into your farm's profits, it might be 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.](#)

Crop insurance discount: Sign-up opens Dec. 1

Fall sign-up for this crop insurance discount program opens for eligible

CROP INSURANCE DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

FOR FARMERS PLANTING COVER CROPS

LEARN MORE OR SIGN UP AT APPLY.CLEANWATERIOWA.ORG

applicants using cover crops on Dec. 1.

This program through IDALS and RMA is offering up to a \$5/ac discount for participants using cover crops.

Find out more [here](#).

IN THE FIELD

Research report: "Interseeding Cover Crops to Corn"



PFI cooperators' **Dick Sloan** and **Jack Boyer** wanted to determine if they could successfully interseed an overwintering cover crop mix into standing corn.

To see what happened, [check out the research report](#), including thoughts from Dick and Jack!

Research report: "Fertilizing Cover Crops"



PFI cooperator **Dick Sloan** was curious if applying 12 lb N/ac at cover crop planting would jump-start its fall growth and lead to better spring growth.

While the results of Dick's trial showed the added N did not affect spring cover crop biomass nor soybean yields, Dick wants to tinker more with the N placement. He thinks the fall planting date is more important for cover crop growth compared to fall N fertilization.

[Read the full report here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

PFI events

All events below are listed in central standard time.

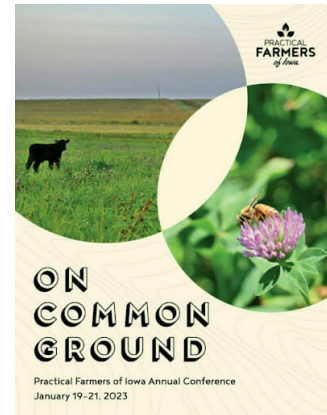
Annual conference: Register now

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.

Check out these session offerings (plus many more!):

- Managing Herbicide Residuals Before Cover Crops
- Alternative to Rye? Testing Winter Camelina in the Field
- Successfully Planting into Cover Crops.



Consider attending our Organic No-Till in Row Crop Systems short course ahead of the conference on Jan. 19-20. Featured speakers include: **Rick Clark, Loran Steinlage, Joel Gruver** and more!

Jan 6: Shared Learning Call - The Many Uses of Red Clover

Hosted by: Practical Farmers of Iowa and Scott Schultz
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

Friends of PFI cover crop events

Dec 9: Workshop - Cover Crop Producer Workshop

Hosted by: Prairie Soil Pioneers & Kansas Soil Health Alliance
9 a.m.-4 p.m. | Alma, KS

Dec 13: Conference - Wisconsin Cover Crop Conference

Hosted by: University of Wisconsin Division of Extension
12:30-7 p.m. | Wisconsin Dells, WI

Dec 14: Webinar - Iowa Learning Farms Webinar

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Lisa Schulte-Moore
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

Dec 14: Webinar - New And Emerging Cover Crops Winter Series: CoverCress (TM)

Hosted by: NREC, ICCON & IL Sustainable Ag Partnership
9-10 a.m. | Online

Jan 11: Webinar - New And Emerging Cover Crops Winter Series: Camelina

Hosted by: NREC, ICCON & IL 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 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 much do you know about PFI's Cooperators' Program?

I've never heard of it.

Select

I just read about it for the first time.

Select

I come across the reports from time to time.

Select

I actively look for reports on the website & would like to be more involved.

Select

I'm looking forward to the upcoming meeting & my next on-farm trial.

Select

Previous poll results:

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

- **100% and done! - 37.8%**
- 50-100% - 24.3%
- Will be 100% - 16.2%
- 1-50% - 18.9%
- No cover crops this year - 2.7%

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