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The Practical
**COVER
CROPPER**
March 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Ron Stone's primary goals with his cereal rye cover crop include building soil organic matter, building water holding capacity and improving infiltration to buffer against wet springs and dry summers. "I have done cover crops for many years in Humboldt and Polk counties, and I just started using cover crops in Warren county."

Fall strip-till for spring success: After planting rye, Ron strip-tills in the fall, creating a narrow strip to plant corn in the spring. Ron explains that this

method reduces the risk of N tie-up, pathogen spread and competition between the rye and the corn.

Planting green: Building organic matter is one of his primary goals, so Ron prioritizes planting green to maximize spring biomass. Planting green has a few additional benefits: Ron finds his planter glides through living rye, and with improved infiltration, he's able to get in the field more easily during a wet spring. Ron terminates the rye within a week of planting on a warm day with glyphosate.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Reminder: Midwest Covers and Grains Thursday!



Get ready for a day of learning and networking with farmers and industry professionals TOMORROW in Cedar Rapids!

Walk-in registrations are welcome beginning at 8 a.m. Thursday morning.

FREE for PFI members; \$40 for non-members.

If you are in town TONIGHT (Wednesday), join PFI staff and other farmers at Lion Bridge Brewing at 6 p.m. to chat over beer and bar food.

Now Hiring: Field Crops Education Coordinator



This department delivers robust educational programming consisting of field days, conferences, workshops and webinars.

Staff in this department also facilitate meet-ups and other mechanisms to build farmer peer networks and write educational content featuring farmer knowledge for PFI's media, including PFI's quarterly magazine, blog and email newsletters.

March 17 deadline: NRCS conservation funding



Iowa farmers interested in implementing new conservation practices on their farms have **until [March 17 to apply](#)** for the next round of Farm Bill program assistance through the NRCS.

Producers interested in signing up should visit or call their local NRCS field office.

Survey: Crop and livestock integration



Match Made in Heaven
Livestock + Crops

Integration of crops and livestock brings both benefits and challenges. **[The “Match Made in Heaven” survey](#)** wants to hear where you’re at! Share your interests, experiences and barriers around integration.

[Take the survey here.](#)

Match Made in Heaven: Livestock + Crops” is a partnership between crop and livestock associations, universities, public agencies and soil/water groups.

IN THE FIELD

Blog: New to Cover Crops before Corn?



[This 2018 blog](#) provides essential tips for spring management of a cover crop before corn.

Learn from farmer **Steve Berger** about his N program, cover crop termination and planter set-up for corn after a rye cover crop.

New Research: Timing of Roll-Crimping Rye Cover Crop and Planting Soybeans



The latest [research report](#) from PFI Cooperator **Jon Bakehouse** compared two roll-crimping + soybean plant-date combinations.

Jon found that roller crimping the rye and planting the soybeans at the anthesis stage resulted in a 8 bu/ac yield difference compared to roller crimping the rye and planting beans at the dough stage!

Additional resources:

- [Research: Corn following Rye](#)
- [Blog: 8 Planter Adjustments for Planting into Cover Crop Residue](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

PFI events

All events below are listed in central standard time.

Farminar: Diversified Crop Rotations in an Organic System



In this farminar, Illinois organic farmer **Jacob Landis** will share his experience with crop rotations, including alfalfa, field peas and sunflowers, both as single crops and double crops.

Learn more about how these crops contribute to Jacob's organic operation, the way cover crops can fit into diverse rotations and the influence of variable weather conditions

[Register](#)

Upcoming events

March 2: Conference - [Midwest Covers & Grains](#)

Hosted by: Practical Farmers of Iowa
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Cedar Rapids, IA

March 8-9: Conference - [The Midwest Soil Health Summit](#)

Hosted by: Sustainable Farming Association
Alexandria, MN

March 7: Farminar - [Diversified Crop Rotations in an Organic System](#)

Hosted by: Jacob Landis & Practical Farmers of Iowa
Noon - 1:30 p.m. | Online

March 8: Webinar - [Weed Management In Rotational Organic No-Tillage Systems](#)

Hosted by: Rodale Institute
1 - 2 p.m. | Online

March 10: Shared Learning Call - [Oats from Planting to Post-Harvest](#)

Hosted by: Ben Dwire & Practical Farmers of Iowa
Noon - 1 p.m. | Online

March 22: Webinar - [Iowa Learning Farms Webinar](#)

Hosted by: Seth Watkins & Iowa Learning Farms
Noon - 1 p.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.

What is your experience with strip-tilling rye ahead of corn?

I strip-till rye in the fall

Select

I strip-till rye in the spring

Select

I use precision planting or plug the drill to achieve skip rows

Select

N/A - I don't use rye ahead of corn

Select

Other

Select

Previous poll results:

What is your primary goal when planting a multi-species cover crop?

- **Weed control - 27.8%**
- **Soil fertility - 27.8%**
- **Other - 22.2%**
- **Grazing - 16.7%**
- **N/A, I don't plant multi-species covers - 5.6%**

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