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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

The Practical
**COVER
CROPPER**

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Amos and Tina Troester own and operate T-A Cattle and Covers LLC near Garnavillo, Iowa, where they grow corn, soybeans, oats, cereal rye and triticale. The Troesters are transitioning to a stocker cattle enterprise so they can better use their diverse cover crop mix into the fall and winter after they come off their rotationally-grazed perennial pastures in the summer.

Seeding strategy: After a small grain like rye is harvested, Amos seeds a diverse cover crop mix featuring species like Austrian winter peas, Sunn hemp, clovers, brassicas and more. This summer they are drilling a mix at 48 lb/ac with the goal of getting roughly 60 live seeds per square foot. Their cattle will graze November through January, so good growth before the first fall frost is important.

Feed value: Amos grazed 74 head of cattle on 50 acres of cover crop for 94 days (Nov. 2022 to Jan. 2023). The cattle gained an average of 151 lb per head (1.61 pounds per day) during the 94 days. Amos calculated the total cost per ac

(seed, supplemental feed, water, fence, labor, etc) for the grazing at \$165.90 per ac (or a cost of \$0.74/lb. gained). When he sold the cattle in February, the extra 151 lb/head brought an additional \$281.62 in revenue/head (at raw weight price \$1.865/lb.). All in all, grazing the cover crop provided a net profit of \$250.90/ac., not including the additional profit from the grain harvested in the spring. Amos still sees room for improvement. "We didn't fully utilize those acres; we could've increased the stock by 20 to 30 head, but it will be different year to year," he says.

Amos' tips for profitable grazing:

1. Start grazing earlier to graze more biomass.
2. Determine the best weight class of cattle for efficiency and conversion.
3. Create a crop rotation that prioritizes grazing cattle in the fall and winter every year.
4. Put your best cover crop grazing mix after your small grain in the rotation.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Check out our new cover crop video series

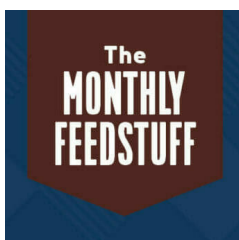


PFI is rolling out a **new cover crop video series** featuring topics for field crops, horticulture and livestock.

Watch the latest video, "[Planting Soybeans Green into Cereal Rye Cover Crop](#)," where PFI members **Rachel Amundson, Nathan Anderson, Jon Bakehouse, Nick Smith and Will Cannon** discuss the process and benefits of planting soybeans into cereal rye and delaying termination until after planting.

Keep an eye out for video releases by, [subscribing to our YouTube channel](#).

Got livestock? Subscribe to "The Monthly Feedstuff"



Grazing cover crops? Interested in learning more about getting livestock on the land?

Then consider signing up for the Monthly Feedstuff, one of PFI's seven enterprise-based email newsletters. [Learn more and sign-up.](#)

Summer 2023 magazine: "Covering Cover Crops"

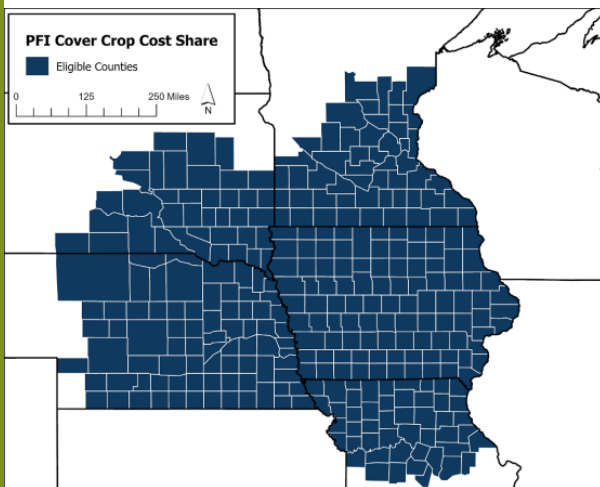


Have you read our Summer 2023 magazine yet? If not check out [this story on the Van Arkel family and their cover crop journey.](#)

"We started with cover crops in 2015 when I came back to the farm," **Zach Van Arkel** says, "and we now put covers on every acre going into beans."

[Read the full story](#)

Apply for \$10/acre PFI cost-share ahead of the busy harvest season



If you'll seed covers this fall and farm in one of these blue counties, you're likely eligible for our cover crop cost share.

Payment rates are \$10 per acre on an unlimited number of acres. This program is stackable with any publicly funded cost-share program.

[View program details, eligibility requirements and apply on our website,](#) or call (515) 232-5661, and press 2 to chat with us about the program.

IN THE FIELD

Herbicides and grazing cover crops

Are you planning to graze cover crops this fall? Some common herbicides have restrictions on grazing cover crops or crop residue; double-check to make sure you're in the clear.

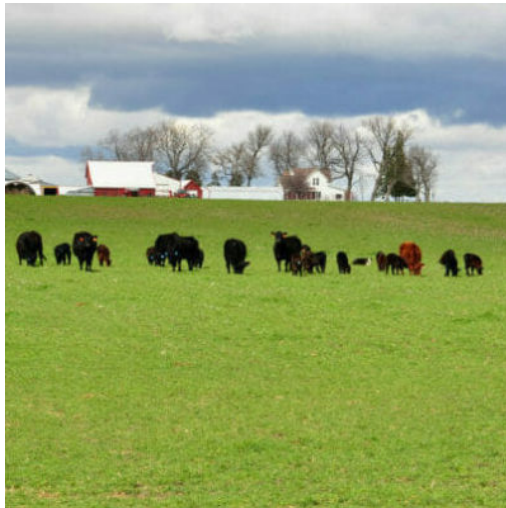
Review these two fact sheets that PFI released on restrictions for [corn herbicides](#) and [soybean herbicides](#) in 2017.



Iowa State Extension released additional helpful tips [in this 2019 blog post](#).

If you're not seeing your herbicide listed, check out the [CDMS database](#) to view the label.

Grazing Cover Crops Farmer Toolkit



PFI has curated an [online toolkit](#) sharing a wealth of resources including "how-to" guides, on-farm research reports and much more!

Connect to sites like the [Midwest Grazing Exchange](#) or navigate a number of other resources!

[Check out the toolkit](#)

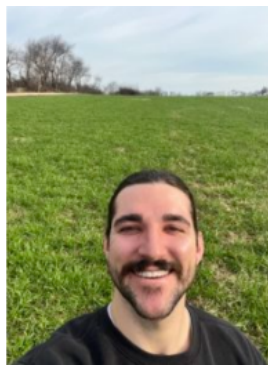
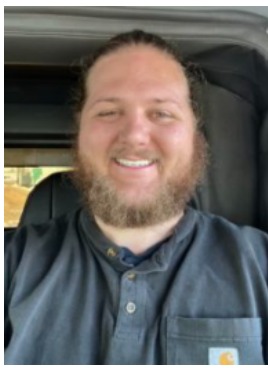
Additional resources:

- Video from Albert Lea Seed: ["Cereal Rye Varieties & Seeding Rates for Rolling & Crimping to Suppress Weeds in Organic Soybeans"](#)
- Blog post from Iowa Learning Farms: ["Importance of Cover Crops following a Drought"](#)
- From the PFI blog: ["Research Highlights the Economic Advantage of Grazing Cover Crops"](#)
- PFI's farmer-led research: ["Economic and Soil Health Impacts of Grazing Cover Crops in a Feedlot System"](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events below are listed in central standard time.

Field Day: Practical Tips for Growing Wheat, Rye and Summer Cover Crops



August 31 | 10 a.m.-Noon | Winslow, IL

Brothers **Ben and Grant Moest** farm just under 3,000 acres of non-GMO corn, food-grade soybeans and small grains used for seed and grain.

RSVP for this field day to gain practical insights into wheat and rye production, summer cover crops and more.

PFI Events

Aug. 10: Field Day - Creating a Legacy of Conservation in Traditional Row Cropping

Hosted by: Joe Merten

10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. | Austin, MN

Aug. 21: Field Day - Growing, Processing and Marketing Popcorn in Iowa

Hosted by: Jim Fitkin & the Fitkin Family

10 a.m.-Noon | Cedar Falls, IA

Aug. 26: Field Day - The Secrets of Stock Cropping

Hosted by: Zack Smith

10a.m.-Noon | Buffalo Center, IA

Sept. 8: Field Day - Creating Space for Conservation and Regenerative Practices With Supportive Landowners

Hosted by: Josh Nelson & Family

12:30-2:30 p.m. | Belmond, IA

Sept. 8: Field Day - Going With the Flow: Saturated Buffers to Improve Water Quality

Hosted by: Jerry Vander Wert

1-3 p.m. | Pella, IA

Friends of PFI Events

Aug. 11: Field Day - Out of the Box Opportunities in Organic Agriculture

Hosted by: Dr. Joel Gruver & Western Illinois University

9 a.m.-3 p.m. | Roseville, IL

Aug. 16: Field Day - Midwest Organic Center Field Day

Hosted by: Rodale Institute

9 a.m.-2 p.m. | Marion, IA

Aug. 18-19: Field Day - Organic Transition Academy

Hosted by: Center for Rural Affairs
Aurora, NE

Aug. 25: Field Day - Story County Cover Crop Field Day

Hosted by: Brian Sampson, Story County SWCD, IDALS, NRCS & Iowa Corn

11 a.m.-1 p.m. | Nevada, IA

[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.

Have you used one of these sites to help graze or find cover crops?

I've used the "Find Cover Crops" app.

Select

I've used the "Midwest Grazing Exchange" site.

Select

I've used both!

Select

I haven't heard of these before, I'll check them out!

Select

I've heard of them, but I don't use them.

Select

Previous poll results:

From where do you source most of your cover crop seed?

- In the area, between 10-60 miles - **44.4%**
- Local, within 10 miles - **33.3%**
- My farm - **22.2%**
- In state but greater than 60 miles - **0%**
- Out of state or further than 60 miles - **0%**

CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

Taylor Hintch

Field Crops Education Coordinator

taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org

Solveig Orngard

Field Crops Education Coordinator

solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org

Lydia English

Field Crops Viability Manager

lydia.english@practicalfarmers.org

Rebecca Clay

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

rebecca.clay@practicalfarmers.org

Chelsea Ferrie

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

chelsea.ferrie@practicalfarmers.org

Morgan Jennings

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

morgan.jennings@practicalfarmers.org

Chat with any of us by calling the PFI office at (515)-232-5661.

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