

SHARE:



[Join Our Email List](#)




PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

Small
Grains
NEWS
January 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



At the PFI Annual Conference **Wade Dooley & Landon Plagge** talked about their experiences as owners and operators of cover crop seed businesses in Iowa.

Watch them discuss:

- Seed business equipment and infrastructure
- Managing workloads
- Planting, harvesting, and post-harvest for small grains
- Seed business expenses and returns



Highlights:

"I really enjoy raising and selling rye because it makes me a decent amount of money and I'm able to get my crop harvested in July instead of panicking about corn harvest and custom cover cropping at the same time." - Wade Dooley

"If you plant small grains you can get an awesome cover crop after; that is one of the huge benefits of planting a small grain like oats. I've grown some of my best corn after oats and a cover crop like turnips, radish and volunteer oats." - Landon Plagge

[Watch the recording of Wade & Landon's session](#)

PROGRAM UPDATES

Open for 2023: Small grains cost-share



Farmers in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin with conventional or transition-to-organic small grain acres are still eligible for cost-share of \$20/acre when they follow their small grain with a legume cover crop.

On top of that, we have additional cost share for taking a nitrogen fertilizer credit in corn that follows a small grain in an extended rotation.

[Head to our website to learn more and apply today!](#)

Small Grains News: A Year in Review



In 2022 we spoke with farmers from 5 different Midwest states about a variety of topics and practices.

Re-visit [these featured farmers we talked to in 2022](#) as we look forward to another year of learning about extended rotations from farmers across the Midwest.

If you want to share your story in 2023, please contact:
taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org

Members: Please complete the PFI member survey

Every three years, we ask all Practical Farmers of Iowa members to complete a survey that provides staff and our board of directors with a snapshot of our membership, and helps guide our future programming.

The information you provide us in this survey is vitally important for keeping us a member-led organization.

If you're a current member of Practical Farmers of Iowa, the email address for the primary contact on your membership should have received an emailed invitation to complete the survey on Jan. 13, 2023. Please check your inbox (and spam folder) for the invitation from surveys@practicalfarmers.org.

If you have any questions or would prefer to complete the survey over the phone, please contact Steve Carlson at steve.carlson@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661.

We appreciate your effort helping to guide our farmer-led organization!

IN THE FIELD

Oats Bearing Profits: Cutting Inputs by Extending Crop Rotations



Nebraska farmer **Jeff Steffen** has used an extended rotation since 2015.

Jeff and his wife Jolene operate a 600-acre farm in the most northeast portion of the state and they raise oats for cover crop seed, in addition to corn, soybeans, rye and peas.

In 2022 Jeff shared his experiences raising oats and cutting inputs during a shared learning call, [re-visit the recap blog for insight into Jeff's operation.](#)

Are Brewing and Distilling Markets for Small Grains Right for You?

Alternative markets for small grains can be hard to come by - especially brewing and distilling markets.

This blog highlights grain specifications from one brewery and one distillery in 2018. If you're looking



to grow grains for alternative markets, [learn more about what it takes here.](#)

Additional economic & market resources:

- [Small Grains Business Directory](#)
- [Markets FAQ](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

PFI's Midwest Covers & Grains Conference



Come learn from other farmers and advance your understanding of how diversified rotations and cover crops can work for you.

This one-day event [will feature a variety of sessions](#) exploring a range of topics including selling cover crop seed, relay cropping and more!

[Register Today](#)

Shared Learning Call on Feb. 3: Marsden Update with Marshall McDaniel



Marshall McDaniel works as an associate agronomy professor at ISU. His research focuses on the interactions between soils and plants and how humans can interfere with or enhance these interactions.

[In this shared learning call hear from Marshall about ongoing ISU research at Marsden farms.](#)

[Register](#)

All times listed are central daylight time

Feb 3: Shared Learning Call - Marsden Update Hosted by: Marshall McDaniel & Practical Farmers of Iowa
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

March 2: Conference - Midwest Covers & Grains Conference
Hosted by: Practical Farmers of Iowa
Cedar Rapids, IA

Feb 7: Farminar - Thinking Through Cover Crops: How to Set Goals, Design Optimal Seed Mixes and Minimize Costs
Hosted by: Thomas Björkman & Practical Farmers of Iowa
Noon-1:30 p.m. | Online

March 7: Farminar - Diversified Crop Rotations in an Organic System
Hosted by: Jacob Landis & Practical Farmers of Iowa
Noon-1:30 p.m. | Online

Feb 23-25: Conference - The Marbleseed (formerly MOSES) Organic Farming Conference
Hosted by: Marbleseed
La Crosse, WI
Visit PFI staff at this event!

March 10: Shared Learning Call- Topic TBD
Hosted by: Practical Farmers of Iowa
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

[More upcoming events](#)

Contact taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org to plan or promote an event.

STRAW POLL

How does your corn yield following a legume cover/hay (clover, alfalfa, vetch, etc.) in extended rotation compare to your corn yield in a two-year corn-soybean rotation?

Answer the poll question below:

Lesser corn yield following a legume cover/hay

Select

About the same

Select

0 - 10 bushel/acre increase following a legume cover/hay

Select

Over 10 bushel/acre increase following a legume cover/hay

Select

N/A

Select

Previous poll results:

Which of the following small grains markets would you like to learn more about in the new year?

- **All of the above and more! - 30%**
- Cover crop seed markets - 20%
- Niche markets (brewing markets, pet food) - 20%
- Livestock feed markets - 15%
- None of the above - I'd rather keep my small grains on-farm - 10%
- Conventional food-grade - 5%

Send us your straw poll ideas! We want to know what YOU want to know. Reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

STAY CONNECTED



Looking for more? Contact us today!

Lydia English

Field Crops Viability Manager

lydia.english@practicalfarmers.org

(515) 232-5661

Taylor Hintch

Field Crops Education Coordinator

taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org

(515) 232-5661

Rebecca Clay

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

rebecca.clay@practicalfarmers.org

(515) 232-5661

Did someone forward you this newsletter? Would you like similar content delivered to your inbox monthly? **Sign up to receive Small Grains News**