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Small
Grains
NEWS
April 2021

Greetings,

April showers bring May flowers and (hopefully) for those of us in dry areas, soil moisture! As we patiently wait for corn and soybean planting season, it's important to remember how extended rotations help reduce costs. A [recent article by Iowa State Extension](#) highlighted that increases in nitrogen fertilizer prices are outpacing those in corn prices. Adding a small grain crop to your corn-soybean rotation can lower input costs, while growing biological sources of N, such as legumes, can cut fertilizer costs for the following year.

If you haven't already applied, [small grain cost share is still available](#). Contact lydia@practicalfarmers.org with cost share questions

Happy planting,
The Strategic Initiatives Team

"Catching Up" with you this summer

This summer we will host a series of small, energizing, in-person gatherings on farms across Iowa.

We're starting the planning, and the line-up will expand on a rolling basis throughout the summer as more pop-up, local events are organized. [Fill out this form](#) to let us know your interests and availability.



Research report: "Early-season mechanical weed control in oats"



Doug Alert and **Margaret Smith** of Hampton, IA typically co-seed oats with a red clover cover underseeding in their organic production system. Concerned about weed control, they were curious to learn if early mechanical weeding of the oats would have any effect on oat yield, intercropped red clover and weed pressure. They originally intended to trial tine weeding the oats, but found that rotary hoeing handled soybean residue better.

Alert and Smith recorded equal oat yields and observed no visual difference in weed pressure between the rotary hoe treatment and the control. They observed better clover establishment with the co-seeding. Rotary hoeing twice and broadcast-seeding the red clover (rather than co-seeding with the oats) cost \$32.80/ac more than their typical practice. [Read the full report here.](#)

Research report: Overwinter vs. winterkill clover green manures in a cereal rye and corn rotation



Clovers that winterkill can be easier to manage in the spring, but do they provide the same benefits?

Dick Sloan of Rowley, IA wanted to compare corn yield and profitability between two green manure mixes – one that overwinters (medium red/alsike clover) and one that winterkills (crimson/berseem clover). He found that the overwinter mix generated more fall biomass and total N than the winterkill mix, and that corn in the overwinter strips out-yielded the winterkill strips. You can [learn more about Dick's research and results here.](#)

EVENTS

April

(No shared learning call in April)

Virtual Farm Visit: Soil Health, Plant Health, and Nutrition with David Brandt and Steve Groff

April 20 | 7:30 a.m. CT | [Online](#)

Webinar: Improving Water Quality through Organic Production

April 21 | 12:00 p.m. CT | [Online](#)

May

(No shared learning call in May)

Nebraska Extension Field Crop Scout Interactive Online Training

May 11 | 8:55 a.m. –5:15 p.m. CT | [Online](#)

IN THE FIELD

Terminating clover

Clover in corn can be more of a pest than an asset. Do you have a clover termination plan? **This January 2020 blog post** highlights mechanical and chemical termination options.

Ready to fertilize?

The optimal time to apply fertilizer to small grains to avoid lodging is before planting or shortly after. Make sure you're ready to apply fertilizer at the right time by referencing the following resources:

- The **fertilizing small grains** short from our Rotationally Raised video series
- The blog from **March 2017's shared learning call** with agronomists on optimal fertilizer strategies
- The blog from **June 2017's shared learning call** on Mark Ditlevson's fertilizer timing and rates
- University of Minnesota's **oat fertilizer recommendations**
- The **blog on small grain fertility** from Dr. Dave Franzen's February 2020 call



STAY CONNECTED



Looking for more? Contact us today!

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