

SHARE:



[Join Our Email List](#)



  
**PRACTICAL FARMERS**  
*of Iowa*

Small  
Grains  
**NEWS**  
August 2023

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



As fall approaches, many farmers prepare to plant their overwintering small grains. **Ross McCaw**, who farms corn, soybeans, and cereal rye near Marengo, IA is gearing up to plant his cereal rye the third week of September.

**Drilling early:** When planting a rye grain crop, Ross seeds the rye immediately after harvesting his early-maturity soybeans. He will plant Aroostook rye which he prefers for its speedy maturity and tall height. The rye will be drilled in 10-inch rows using a 40-foot 1990 John Deere CCS drill. On his 2023 rye, he spread chicken manure as fertilizer for the first time and plans to

continue this process after experiencing positive results.

**Practices to increase tillering:** Next spring, Ross plans to plant 1.8 maturity group soybeans so he can harvest earlier and then promptly drill cereal rye.

The earlier planting date should enable more tillering before the rye goes dormant, increasing yield in the subsequent harvest. Ross also hopes to gain more tillering by applying nitrogen this fall rather than in the spring. An added perk of applying nitrogen in the fall is that the rye plants will be smaller and more supple and less likely to be damaged by the application equipment.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### New blog: "Getting Started with Kernza"

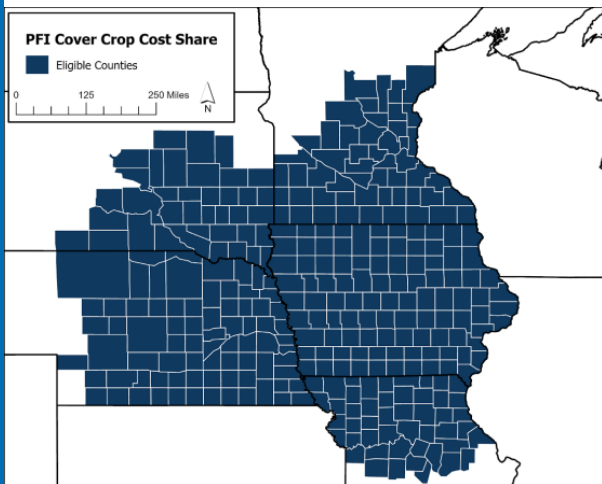


**Ben Penner** farms in southeast Minnesota where he grows Kernza- a perennial grain, heritage wheat, hybrid rye, and works with neighboring farmers to graze sheep and goats on his Kernza crop.

In our August shared learning call he shared tips and resources for planting, harvesting and marketing Kernza.

[Read this blog to learn about his practical tips for growing Kernza.](#)

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



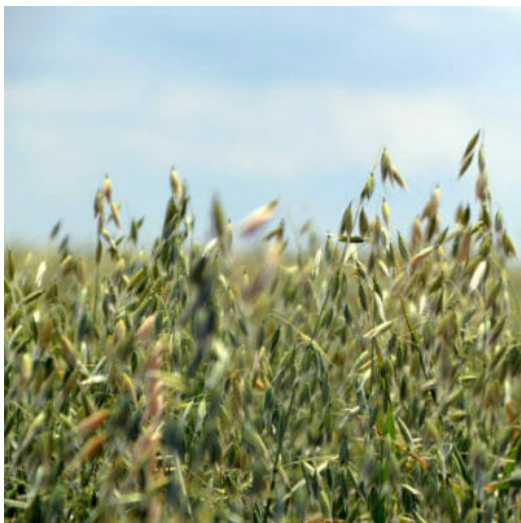
If you'll seed covers this fall and farm in one of these blue counties, you're likely eligible for our cover crop cost-share.

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.

### Farm Service Agency is accepting organic certification cost-share applications

If you are a new or continuing organic farmer, you may be able to receive



payment for up to 75% of your certification costs!

The [Organic Certification Cost-Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#) provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP).

[Learn more and apply by October 31!](#)

## IN THE FIELD

### Research report: “Nitrogen Fertilizer Effect on Cereal Rye Yield and Quality”



In a 2022 research trial, **Dick Sloan** explored nitrogen fertilizer impact on yield and germination quality of harvested cereal rye for cover crop seed.

After comparing a fall-spring split application (57 lb N/ac) and a spring-only application (40 lb N/ac) in a replicated strip-trial, Dick found no change in yield.

[Read the report to learn how germination percentage was affected.](#)

### Video: “Timing of Cereal Rye Planting”



If you’re growing winter cereal rye for harvest or for seed, timing the planting in the fall is important and the window is often short.

Farmers **Wade Dooley and Paul Mugge** share what they have learned about how to achieve higher yield with lower planting rates in this [“Rotationally Raised” video](#) from 2018.

## Blog post: "Determining a Rye Seeding Rate By Counting Seeds"



Seed size can dramatically affect the seeding rate for achieving a desired seed population.

In this blog post from 2016, PFI's Senior Research Manager **Stefan Gailans** discussed how he counted and weighed seeds to determine the seeding rate before planting cereal rye with farmer **Gary Guthrie**.

[See what seeding rates they chose after finding the 1,000-kernel seed weights.](#)

---

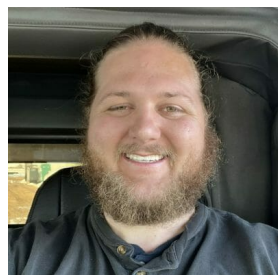
### Additional resources:

- PFI blog: [Making the Most of Winter Grains in an Extended Rotation](#)
- PFI research report: [Cereal Rye and Triticale Variety Trial 2022](#)
- PFI "Rotationally Raised" video: [What to Plant, Where and Why](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*All times listed are central daylight time*

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



**Aug. 31 | 10a.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. They use cover crops on most of their acres and own and operate their independent pork business, High Plains Pork.

[Join them at this field day](#) to gain practical insights into wheat and rye production, summer cover crops and more.

---

## Field day: Creating Space for Conservation and Regenerative Practices with Supportive Landowners



**Sept. 8 | 12:30- 2:30 p.m. | Belmond, IA**

**Josh Nelson** operates Cardinal Creek Farm near Belmond, Iowa, a diversified regenerative family farm that grows rye, oats, corn and soybeans and raises cattle and pigs.

**RSVP to attend this field day** and hear from Josh about ongoing conservation efforts on his farm, new practices he's trying and how he has been able to engage with his landlords, **Paul Thompson and Elena Meyer**, on regenerative practices.

---

### September small grains shared learning call



**Sept. 15 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)**

This two-part shared learning call, will begin with important considerations for winter small grains within an organic context.

**Rosalyn Lehmann**, executive director of Iowa Organic Association, will then provide a brief overview of organic assistance programs currently available and how to learn more.

**[Register on our website.](#)**

---

### Additional PFI events

**Sept. 18: Field Day – [Cooperators' Trial With Soybeans Planted Green, Legume Covers and Strip-Till Corn](#)**

*Hosted by: Tracy & Sue Skaar and Mic Skaar*

10 a.m.-Noon | Hayward, MN

**Sept. 21: Field Day – [Cover Crops Following Small Grains and Grazing Cattle](#)**

*Hosted by: Scott & Nancy Schultz and family*

10 a.m.-Noon | Watertown, WI

---

### Friends of PFI events

**Aug. 30: Field day – [UW Agronomy and Soils Field Day](#)**

**Sept. 12: Training – [NRCS and Organic Farmer Training on Organic](#)**

Hosted by: UW-Madison Extension  
8 a.m.-Noon | Arlington, WI

**Practice Standards**

Hosted by: NRCS

9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Ames, IA

**\*\*\*Visit PFI staff at this event!\*\*\***

[More upcoming events](#)

Contact [solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org) to plan or promote an event.

## STRAW POLL

### What do your fall-planted small grains follow?

Answer the poll question below:

Hay

Select

Corn

Select

Soybeans

Select

Other

Select

I don't plant small grains in the fall

Select

### Previous poll results:

What will you do with your small grain crop immediately after harvesting?

- **Transport it directly to the buyer - 42.1%**
- Store it in a bin - 31.6%
- Store it in a wagon - 15.8%
- Other - 10.5%

*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!

## **Taylor Hintch**

*Senior Field Crops Education Coordinator*  
[taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org)

## **Solveig Orngard**

*Field Crops Education Coordinator*  
[solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org)

## **Rebecca Clay**

*Field Crops Viability Coordinator*  
[rebecca.clay@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:rebecca.clay@practicalfarmers.org)

## **Lydia English**

*Field Crops Viability Manager*  
[lydia.english@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:lydia.english@practicalfarmers.org)

## **Chelsea Ferrie**

*Field Crops Viability Coordinator*  
[chelsea.ferrie@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:chelsea.ferrie@practicalfarmers.org)

## **Morgan Jennings**

*Field Crops Viability Coordinator*  
[morgan.jennings@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:morgan.jennings@practicalfarmers.org)

**Chat with any of us by calling the PFI office at (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***