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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

Small
Grains
NEWS

September 2022

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Between perennial pasture, interseeded corn and small grains, **Mark and Dawn Madison** of Adrian, Minnesota, make sure they have enough grazing options for their cattle. The Madisons are currently running 75 cows on a 25 acre oat field they've divided into three paddocks. Their oats were underseeded with red clover but due to pressure from grasshoppers, they drilled a diverse mix after oat harvest. "We wait until the grasses are roughly 12-inches and the brassicas are 6-inches tall before we start grazing," Dawn says. This year it was roughly six weeks between cover crop seeding and grazing.

Timing is everything: Mark and Dawn keep careful watch on their grazing herds and anticipate only leaving the cattle in each paddock for one or two days. "We'd like to get a second round of grazing yet this year so we want to leave at least half the biomass in the field," they note. Grazing their summer

cover crops, even if for a short period, allows their perennial pastures a rest, which they are especially grateful for during this dry season.

Mix specifics: The Madisons like to have at least six species included in all their cover crop mixes. "Medium red clover is one of my favorites because it's proven itself to be consistent," Dawn says. Other standbys are RTR (radish, turnips, rapeseed), flax and rye.

"Grazing cover crops is a little bit science, a little bit visual cues and a lot of guesswork," Mark adds. "When in doubt, listen to your cows!"

PROGRAM UPDATES

Small Grains Cost-share has re-opened for 2023!



We're baaaack! Already seeded your winter small grains? Know how many acres of oats you'll be growing in 2023? It's never too early to sign-up for our small grains cost-share. Check out our full [program requirements here](#).

[Reserve your acres today!](#)

Blog recap: The "Why" of Winter Barley, Plus 4 Tips on Winter Barley Double Cropping



The September shared learning call featured winter barley breeder **Kevin Smith** from the University of Minnesota, and winter barley grower **Chris Wilson** of Wilson Organics near Cuba City, Wisconsin.

Learn more about winter barley in the [recap blog](#) featuring Kevin and Chris.

Small grains crop insurance resources

The center for rural affairs recently released [resources on crop insurance for small grains](#).

Small grains insurance availability differs by county, so make sure you're in the know for your area. There are



resources available for specific crops including: barley, oats, rye and wheat.

IN THE FIELD

Stay on the right side of the law when selling cover crop seed



Planning on selling cover crop seed to your neighbor this fall?

Make sure you're in the know by revisiting this [2018 blog](#) on how to lawfully sell your cover crop seed.

Calculating the real numbers behind grazing cover crops



Considering using cover crops as a feed source this fall?

[This blog](#) assesses the costs and added value of grazing cover crops.

Read and use the tools found in this blog to help with your decision making this fall.

Additional resources:

- [Livestock and cover crops: assessing cover crop feed value](#)
- [Making the most of winter grains in an extended rotation](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

All times listed are central daylight time

Sept 28: Webinar - [Iowa Learning Farms Webinar](#)

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Raj Raman
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

Sept 29: Webinar - [Planning ahead for Hay Purchases](#)

Hosted by: [UNL & Center for Ag Profitability
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

Sept 29-Oct 2: Conference - [North American Millers Association Annual Meeting](#)

Hosted by: North American Millers Association
Scottsdale, AZ

Oct 5: Webinar - [Iowa Learning Farms Webinar](#)

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms, Vinayak Shedekar & Will Osterholz
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

[More upcoming events](#)

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

STRAW POLL

Do you harvest summer cover crops for fall forage?

Yes

Select

Not yet

Select

No, I don't have livestock

Select

Previous poll results:

Which winter small grains do you grow for grain?

- **Winter wheat - 40.9%**
- Winter rye - 36.4%
- I haven't grown winter small grains but I would like to - 9.1%
- I haven't grown winter small grains and I don't intend to - 9.1%
- Two or more of the above (winter wheat, triticale, barley or rye) - 4.5%
- Winter triticale - 0%
- Winter barley - 0%

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!

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