Seasons greetings,

With a few inches of snow, the landscape feels dormant in central Iowa, even as preparation for the 2021 growing season is well underway. A notable highlight for people looking to grow oats in 2021: we’ve released the results of our 2020 Oat Variety Trial, which tested 18 varieties across four research farms. Read on for additional small grain production and marketing resources.

Wishing you happy holidays,
The Strategic Initiatives Team

January 8 call: Entrepreneurial opportunities with seed cleaning small grains

In the Corn Belt, markets for small grains are limited, but as cover crops gain momentum, the demand for cover crop seed is on the rise.

Enter selling small grains as cover crop seed. Seed should meet purity standards, and therefore should be cleaned.

For Bill Frederick (left) of Jefferson, Iowa, seed cleaning for small grains is a crucial part of his business, Iowa Cover Crop.

On January 8 at 12:15 p.m. call in to hear from Bill as he shares his experience with cleaning seed: from purchasing a cleaner, to settings and maintenance, to marketing.
Re-cap blog: Growing high test weight oats in Iowa: Tips from 23 years of experience

Last Friday **Darren Fehr** of Mallard, Iowa divulged that growing high test weight oats in Iowa is not all that hard if you are intentional in setting yourself up for success.

In this re-cap blog of the shared learning call, learn about the basics of growing high test weight oats.

**Darren shared advice on variety selection, seeding best practices, fertility, and more.**

Check out the small grains programming at our annual conference

The 2021 Practical Farmers annual conference is "Coming Home," meaning that in the depths of winter you need not make the treacherous journey to Ames this year. From January 21-23, you can participate in sessions from your home.

**Sessions of interest include:**
Choosing the Right Oat Varieties – Breeding to Buying
Cover Crop-Based Organic No-Till Systems
Relay-cropping Rye and Soybeans
Getting Creative in Order to Integrate Crops and Cattle
And so much more!

Register for the conference

Southern Iowa oat and wheat market plus cost share

Farmers in southern Iowa will continue to have a new market option for wheat and oats. In partnership with Practical Farmers, Smithfield grain elevators in Davis City, Iowa will again be offer contracting options for wheat and oats in 2021.

These contracts can be paired with PFI’s 2021 cost share program as long as the small grain crop is followed by a cover crop that contains at least one legume species. Learn more about the program here.

EVENTS

January

Shared Learning Call: Entrepreneurial opportunities with seed cleaning small grains
January 8 | 12:15 - 1:15 p.m. CST | dial (605) 313-5784 and enter passcode 239000#

Speaking of Oats: The T3 Database and Applications to Oats
January 21 | 10 a.m. CST/11 a.m. EST | Online, pre-registration required

Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Conference: Coming Home
January 21-23 | Online

February

Shared Learning Call: Management for Fusarium in Small Grains
February 5 | 12:15 - 1:15 p.m. CST | dial (605) 313-5784 and enter passcode 239000#

Farming for the Future: A Forum Exploring Ecosystem Markets
February 12 | 11:20 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. CST | Online

OGRAIN: Reducing Tillage in Organic Grain Productions-- Latest in Agronomics and Equipment
IN THE FIELD

Spring small grain variety selection

Here are some resources to help you select a small grain variety:

- A [compilation of variety trial data](#) from a number of neighboring state's universities
- A [blog on using oat variety trial results to guide selection](#) from Dec 2019
- The [variety selection episode](#) of our "Rotationally Raised" video series
- The [blog from Jan 2017’s shared learning call](#) with seed dealer Mac Ehrhardt
- The [blog from Feb 2018 shared learning call](#) on variety selection with breeder Melanie Caffe
- PFI's [Past Practical Farmers of Iowa Oat Variety Trial Results](#)
- The Apr 2020 [blog on the importance of variety selection](#) and some things to think about when selecting a variety

STAY CONNECTED

Looking for more? Contact us today!

**Rebecca Clay**  
Strategic Initiatives Agronomy Coordinator  
[rebecca@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:rebecca@practicalfarmers.org)  
(515) 232-5661

**Sarah Carlson**  
Strategic Initiatives Director  
[sarah@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:sarah@practicalfarmers.org)  
(515) 232-5661

**Lydia English**  
Strategic Initiatives Coordinator  
[lydia@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:lydia@practicalfarmers.org)  
(515) 232-5661