

Small Grains News - Last call to pre-register for Midwest Covers and Grains Conference

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Jude Becker raises organic pork on his sixth-generation family farm, Becker Lane Organic, near Dyersville, Iowa. He also grows corn, soybeans and hybrid rye for livestock feed. He shared his experiences and knowledge of the benefits and challenges of growing hybrid rye at PFI's Annual Conference in January.

Jude first ordered hybrid rye seed for fall planting after attending a PFI field day hosted by **Tom Frantzen** in 2017. In the six years since, he has seen his yields rise

and has found countless benefits including year-round green cover, fewer cash inputs, greater weed suppression and profits higher than that of corn at approximately \$1,400 to \$1,500 per acre.

Tricky timing: Finding the right place for hybrid rye in rotations can be challenging. Jude recommends planting rye following hay or pastured fields so that you can plant in September rather than planting rye following corn or soybean harvest later in the fall. He values seeding a thinner stand to allow for more tillering and better yield come summer.

Strength in straw: In addition to replacing corn in pigs' diets, Jude says hybrid rye produces "mountains of straw," which come in handy for the pigs' bedding. The straw also contributes to nutrient recycling, removing potassium and phosphorus that are then returned to the soil through manure spreading.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Last call to pre-register for Midwest Covers and Grains Conference



Monday, March 4 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Mankato, MN

You can still join us for the [Midwest Covers and Grains Conference!](#)

Come hear about cutting back on inputs, summer grazing, marketing grains and so much more!

If you miss today's registration deadline, walk-in registrations will be accepted. [Check out the schedule and speaker line-up.](#)

Apply for our N Rate Risk Protection Program



Are rising input costs affecting your farm's profits?

Our **[N Rate Risk Protection Program](#)** can help you cut nitrogen applications to corn, saving you money and enhancing farm resilience.

You'll work with PFI agronomists to reduce nitrogen by at least 20 pounds per acre. **If your yield drops, our program will help make up the difference at \$35 per acre.**

[Learn more and apply today.](#)

IN THE FIELD

Winter 2023 magazine: "Gains With Grains"



Brad Sheely and his sons **Joel and Ben** began growing oats five years ago, after discovering an opportunity to sell to Grain Millers.

Since their initial planting, Brad, Joel and Ben have used oats to expand the farm operation into several new enterprises – from new markets, to custom harvesting, to expanding livestock on their farm.

[Read their story in this recent magazine article.](#)

Rotationally Raised video: "How to Calibrate a Grain Drill"



Planting oats this spring? Have you calibrated your grain drill?

[In this Rotationally Raised video,](#) **Wade Dooley** of Albion, Iowa, walks through the process of drill calibration.

Learn why he hand-counts his seeds and how he uses simple equations to find his preferred seeding rate.

Additional resources

- Blog post: ["Small Grains Equipment Essentials"](#)
- Magazine article: ["A Gift for Growing Small Grains"](#)
- Blog post: ["Fool Proof Frost Seeding Legumes in the Small Grain Year"](#)
- Iowa State University Extension blog post: ["Winter Weather Woes: Assessing Whether or Not to Frost Seed"](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Shared learning call: "Frost-Seeding Clover into Small Grains With Meadowlark Organics"



Friday, March 1 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

John and Halee Wepking own and operate Meadowlark Farm and Mill in Ridgeway, Wisconsin, where they grow and mill a range of grains, including buckwheat, corn, wheat and rye.

[Tune in to our March shared learning call](#) to hear about Halee and John's farming operation and learn how they frost-seed red clover and tine weed their small grains in one equipment pass. **[RSVP to receive a reminder before the event.](#)**

Connect with field crop farmers near you at our upcoming social



Tuesday, March 12 | 1-3 p.m. | Prairie City, IA

Join farmer host **Will Cannon** for our first **field crops farmer social** of 2024.

These socials are casual opportunities to connect with other farmers in your area to discuss challenges and ideas or to share farm stories. Conversation topics could include anything from cover crops and pest management to marketing and equipment sharing.

Refreshments will be provided. Email **solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org** to let us know if you plan to come!

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central Time.

March 19: Webinar – An Alternative Third Crop? Relay Cropping Winter Camelina with Soybeans

Hosted by: Robert Harvey

Noon-1 p.m. | **Online**

April 12: Small Grains Shared Learning Call – Topic TBD

Noon-1 p.m. | **Online**

Friends of PFI events

March 5: Conference – Central Nebraska Soil Health Conference

Hosted by: University of Nebraska - Lincoln

8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. | Hastings, NE

March 7: Virtual Field Day – Exploring Sustainable Intensification on Iowa's Landscape through Relay Intercropping

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms

1-2 p.m. | **Online**

March 13: Webinar – Unlocking the Potential of Biochar: Impacts on Soil Health and Productivity

Hosted by: Rodale Institute

1-2 p.m. | **Online**

March 13-14: Conference – 2024 Midwest Soil Health Summit

Hosted by: Sustainable Farming Association

All Day | Mankato, MN

March 16: Conference – Acres of Opportunity

Hosted by: Iowa Farm Bureau
8 a.m.-5 p.m. | Ottumwa, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

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Chat with any of us by calling the PFI office at (515)232-5661.

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