

Small Grains News - Cost-saving disease and weed control + Field day schedule is live

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Cost-effective weed and disease management in small grains

During a wet spring, weed and fungal growth compete with a developing small grain crop, causing many issues and costing valuable dollars when not managed effectively. **Wade Dooley** of Albion, Iowa, has faced many of these challenges after a decade growing small grains but has learned how to make smart decisions with big-picture finances in mind.

Is fungicide necessary? Many diseases can run rampant in small grains, but the most problematic appears during the flowering stage and when weather has been warm and humid. Wade only sprays fungicide when those two key variables are expected to align. "I know a lot of folks who spray without checking any climatic conditions," he says. "Often, it's not worth the extra cost." Farmers must be thinking ahead though, because once signs of disease appear, it usually is too late to effectively apply fungicide.

Staging a crop: To control weeds in his small grain fields, Wade pays close attention to each growth stage of the crop. If the field’s rotation has not successfully mitigated weed pressure, he may decide to spray herbicide, but only when weather conditions and stage of development are safe for application.

Read Wade’s insights in these two blogs recapping his April 2024 shared learning call.

[Disease management](#)

[Weed control](#)

PROGRAM UPDATES

Registration now open for 2024 field day season



Our 2024 field days are now available to view on our website.

Check out our interactive map and discover field days near you.

This is our biggest field day season yet, with nearly 60 farms across Iowa and neighboring states opening their farms to guests for another season of farmer-to-farmer learning.

Learn about a range of topics, from relay cropping to milling grains to reducing inputs. **View the lineup.**

Registration is open for our free cover crop workshop in Nebraska



Add our **Central Nebraska Cover Crop Workshop** to your calendar!

Join other farmers of all experience levels in discussing the role of cover crops in drought conditions, how they help in diversifying rotations, and the opportunities they provide for input reduction and livestock feed.

Come network with other farmers while exploring how to make cover crops work in Nebraska.

IN THE FIELD

Blog post: "How to Manage Small Grains Diseases While Maintaining the Bottom Line"



Knowing the key windows for disease susceptibility, when control measures are effective and the potential impacts if you don't treat are all key considerations in making a profitable management decision.

Revisit this blog recapping a 2019 shared learning call to gain an overview of common small grain diseases and treatment recommendations.

Rotationally Raised video series: "Disease Management in Small Grains"



When warmer weather follows a wet spell, disease is more likely to appear in a small grain crop.

Watch this video to hear several Iowa farmers share their methods and timing for applying fungicide and how they determine when disease is likely to be an issue.

Additional resources

- PFI video: **"Crop Rotation for Weed Suppression – Organic Weed Control"**
- PFI magazine article: **"A Return to Scouting"**
- For scab and blight info: **"U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative"**
- From Michigan State University Extension: **"Weed Control in Small Grains"**

- From Penn State Extension: "[Herbicide Recommendations for Winter Small Grains](#)"

UPCOMING EVENTS

Shared Learning Call: "Boosting Forage Quality While Reducing Nitrogen Inputs in Extended Rotation"



Friday, June 7 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Josh Hiemstra operates Hiemstra Dairy Farm with his family in east central Wisconsin. They farm 790 acres, growing corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and other forage mixes.

With the help of research trials and cost-share programs, Josh has reduced synthetic nitrogen inputs for several years.

[Join our next shared learning call](#) to hear how he is boosting forage nutrition following wheat and growing his own nitrogen with cover crops.

Field day: "Rye Resiliency: Strategies for Using Rye to Build and Maintain Soil Health"



Monday, June 17 | 4:30-6:30 p.m. | Packwood, IA

J.D. Hollingsworth and his father **Dave Hollingsworth** raise corn and soybeans and grow cereal rye as a cover crop and for seed on their fully no-till and cover-cropped farm.

Attend their field day to learn how they're working to steward their farm's soil. You'll get to see a small field of soybeans with roller-crimped rye and the rye crop J.D. and Dave will harvest for seed mid-summer. [RSVP today.](#)

Field day: "Building Soil Health Through Relay-Cropping, Extended Rotations and Reduced Tillage"



Wednesday, June 26 | 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. | Humboldt, IA

Doug Adams grows corn and soybeans using strip-till, no-till and cover cropping on his farm. Oats and other small grains extend his rotation, cover the soil for more of the year and more effectively cycle nutrients. Doug is also working with neighbor **Harley Hett** to transition Harley's operation as he plans for retirement.

Come hear his experiences with relay-cropping soybeans and winter wheat to control weeds and build the soil. [**RSVP.**](#)

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central time.

June 19: Field Day – A Legacy of Stewardship: Using Cover Crops, Biochar and Nature for Sustainable Agriculture

Hosted by: Rob Stout
4-6 p.m. | Washington, IA

June 20: Field day – Discovering Covers: Options From Seeding to Species and How They Affect Soil Health

Hosted by: Edmund & Barbara Ruff
4-6 p.m. | Garnavillo, IA

June 22: Field day – Maintaining High Yields With Cover Crops and Conservation

Hosted by: Kurtis & Kathy Kadolph and Al Kadolph
10 a.m.-Noon | Hubbard, IA

June 27: Field day – Farming Outside the Box: A Fresh Approach to Diversification on a Nebraska Farm

Hosted by: Junior & Katelyn Pfanstiel, Gene & Julie Pfanstiel
10 a.m.-Noon | McLean, NE

June 28: Field Day – Creating Resiliency Through Diversity With Crops and Livestock

Hosted by: Kevin Wagner & family | KC Stock and Crop LLC
10 a.m.-Noon | Cuba City, WI

July 2: Field Day – Nutrient Management Using Intercropping in an Organic Operation

Hosted by: Scott & Catherine Wedemeier of Grassway Farm
10 a.m.-Noon | Maynard, IA

Friends of PFI events

May 24: Field Day – Small Grains Field Day

Hosted by: Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership

8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. | Urbana, IL

June 8: Workshop – Women & Soil

Hosted by: Women, Land and Legacy

1-5 p.m. | Dyersville, IA

June 18: Field Day – Organic Water Quality Field Day

Hosted by: ISU Organic Agriculture Program

3-5 p.m. | Boone, IA

May 31: Festival – Field Festival at Riggs Beer Company

Hosted by: University of Illinois Crop Sciences

3-6 p.m. | Urbana, IL

June 12: Webinar – Ancient Wheat: The Old Grain with Prospects

Hosted by: Rodale Institute

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

June 24: Field Trip – From Seed to Slice: Illinois Field Trip

Hosted by: The Bread Bakers Guild of America

7 a.m.-5 p.m. | Chicago, IL

View our events calendar

Contact our team

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