
Practical Cover Cropper - Key takeaways from a cover crop field day + Find us at the Farm Progress Show

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.





Key takeaways for first time cover croppers and no-tillers at Alex Udermann's Minnesota field day

Alex and Krissy Udermann own and operate Meadowbrook Dairy near Sartell, Minnesota, alongside Alex's father, John, and brother, Jake. Their farm includes a 1,000-acre no-till row crop operation, along with 80 dairy cows and 300 beef steers. They also grow cereal rye for seed, use cover crops extensively, custom-haul liquid and solid manure and do custom no-till planting and cover crop seeding. Passionate about caring for their soil health, the Udermanns recently started composting to grow fungal biology and are working to reduce their commercial fertilizer use.

On August 9, at their field day, Alex shared what he has learned about incorporating soil health principles like cover crops on their farm, demonstrated their no-till drill for attendees and had Stephanie McLain and Julie Reberg with NRCS show the impact of soil health practices on the soil.

Some of Alex's key takeaways for first-timers implementing no-till and cover crops include:

- Have a nutrient, manure and herbicide plan.
- Reduce manure rates and cover more acres.
- Get your co-op involved right away. Tell them your plans and you may have to educate them about your soil health, goals and changing the way you spray and fertilize.
- Sign up for CSP, EQIP or funding available to cost-share buying equipment and planting cover crops to take away financial risk.
- Have proper equipment capable of performing in no-till conditions. Row cleaners, down force, closing system and nutrient banding are essential!
- Educate yourself, network at events and set goals for yourself and your farm.

Alex also shared his farm costs per acre including usage of cover crops and no-till to give attendees an idea of how these practices pencil out on his farm. He estimates that by operating no-till and using cover crops, his combined costs per acre in the fall and spring are nearly \$100 less than with conventional tillage with his elimination of several passes through the field and other management practices. [See the rest of PFI's field day schedule on our website.](#)

PROGRAM UPDATES

Support for establishing habitat on your farm

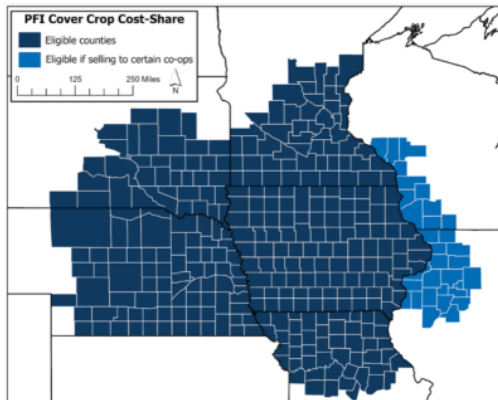


Enrollment is open in PFI's habitat incentives program!

Are you interested in planting prairie strips or engaging in precision conservation analysis? This program provides technical and financial incentives to help you reach your farm conservation goals.

[Enroll on our website.](#)

Enroll in our cover crop cost-share



Do you plan to seed cover crops this fall?

Applications for our cover crop cost-share program just opened.

Payment rates are \$10 or \$15 per acre on an unlimited number of acres. The program extends beyond Iowa and is stackable with any publicly funded cost-share programs.

[Check your eligibility and apply.](#)

IN THE FIELD

Magazine article: "The Roots of Nitrogen"



From cover crops to cost-share, PFI farmers are working to build soil health and reduce inputs in hopes of stabilizing nutrient cycles – and farm economics.

[Read this recent article](#) featuring farmers **Kevin Veenstra and Josh Hiemstra** on their work to improve their soil health and the benefits they've seen from cover crops, extended rotations and reduced tillage.

Practical Cover Croppers video: "Seeding Cover Crops With an Air Seeder and Rolling Harrow"



Will Cannon of Prairie City, IA, has MacGyvered a method for seeding cover crops quickly and inexpensively. The setup: a Hiniker air seeder with Gandy seed meters mounted on a DIY frame that pulls a pre-owned J&M double rolling harrow. Will estimates this seeding method, including labor costs, to be just \$5-\$6 per acre!

[Watch this Practical Cover Croppers video](#) highlighting his second year with this set-up.

Additional resources

- **[IAWA Cost-Share Comparisons Charts](#)**
- Blog Post: **[Refining Roll-Crimping Practices: A Summary of Seven Years of PFI Cooperator Research](#)**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Look for PFI at the Farm Progress Show



**Tuesday, Aug. 27 – Thursday, Aug. 29
8 a.m.-5 p.m. | Boone, IA**

The Farm Progress Show is one of the nation's largest outdoor farm shows.

Practical Farmers of Iowa staff and farmers will be located in the **Varied Industries tent at booth VIT9513.**

Find our booth to join conversations, ask questions and share advice on cover crops, small grains, grazing, conservation cost-share and more.

Field day: "Reducing Nitrogen With Rotational Cover Cropping and Biologic Additions"



Friday, Aug. 30 | 4-6 p.m. | Marengo, IA

Host: Ross McCaw

Join **Ross McCaw** as he shares his cover crop tricks of the trade. He'll discuss his rotational cover crop practices, which include planting 1.8 maturity group soybeans, for an earlier harvest followed by rye and explain how this may lead to increased yields in the following corn crop.

[Register for this field day!](#)

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed are in Central time.

Sept. 5: Meet-Up – Field Crop Farmer Meet-up

Hosted by: Richard Sperflage

In partnership with ADM

5-7 p.m. | Winthrop, IA

Sept. 12: Field Day – Making a Livelihood With Livestock: A Whole-Farm Approach With Forage Crops and Cover Crops

Hosted by: Dan & Ila Taylor and Noah, Sarah and Todd Taylor

4-6 p.m. | Bouton, IA

Sept. 10: Field Day – Advanced Cover Crop and Nutrition Management

Hosted by: Michael Vittetoe

5-7 p.m. | Washington, IA

Sept. 12: Meet-Up – Field Crop Farmer Meet-up

Hosted by: Paul Hoffman

In partnership with ADM

8 a.m. | Earlville, IL

**Sept. 13: Field Day – Multi-Species
Cover Crops + Farmland Owner
Legacy Award**

Hosted by: Tim Kelley and Brent

Nold

4-6 p.m. | Elmo, MO

**Sept. 19: Field Day – Livestock
Between the Rows: An Adaptive
Approach to Diversifying Illinois
Row Crop Operation**

Hosted by: Luke and Jen Jones

9 a.m.-Noon | Astoria, IL

View our events calendar

Contact our team

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Chat with our cover crops team by calling the PFI office at (515)-232-5661.

Donate today

Join Practical Farmers



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