
**Small Grains News - Preregister for our short course and annual conference by Jan. 2 +
Incorporating small grains and livestock**

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Only a few more days to preregister for our preconference short course: "Extending the Rotation: Finding an Effective Third Crop"

Are you a little bored growing only corn and beans? Curious how to work in a bit of something else? This short course will look at several crops for extended rotations and the feasibility of growing and marketing them in the Midwest. Join farmers and researchers excited to share key production knowledge, new opportunities and their own experience, including mistakes to avoid.

Explore the [schedule for the short course](#) Thursday, Jan. 9-Friday, Jan. 10 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines, Iowa:

Session 1: Exploring Millet Research and Its Potential for Midwestern Farmers

Speakers: Srikanth Panthulugiri, Asheesh Singh, Juan Ignacio Di Salvo

Millet is a small, seeded grass grown worldwide as a grain for human or animal consumption. In this session, we'll explore millet research showing that it requires fewer inputs and can withstand variable weather conditions.

Session 2: Reliant on Rye: Scaling Up to Deliver On Cover Crop Demand

Speaker: Dean Sponheim

Cereal rye has become a cover crop staple across the Midwest. As more acres are covered each year, demand is growing for cover crop seed. In this session, learn where rye fits in rotations, how to scale up and what to know about this growing market.

Session 3: Making Oats Make Sense

Speakers: Anne and Landon Plagge

Oats were once a crop grown extensively in the Midwest but experienced a steep decline over the past several decades. This session will explore how oats fit in farm rotations, where market opportunities exist and why oats are making a comeback and might just make sense as a consistent crop in Midwestern farm rotations.

Session 4: Burgeoning Buckwheat: An Unassuming Crop With Numerous Benefits

Speakers: John Wepking

Grown as either a cover crop or a grain crop, buckwheat fills a special place in a farm's rotation with its short growing season that allows for planting of a subsequent winter cereal crop. Learn the ideal planting time for buckwheat, what crops it should follow in rotation and how to profit from incorporating this modest small-grain crop.

Session 5: Striking Oil: Drilling Down Into Oilseed Opportunities

Speakers: [Matt Leavitt](#) and [Ben Penner](#)

Winter oilseed crops can be processed into biofuels, lubricants, edible oils, animal feed and more. Hear farmer and researcher perspectives on winter camelina and pennycress for farming systems across the Upper Midwest.

Register by Jan. 2
PROGRAM UPDATES

Preregister by Jan. 2 for PFI's 2025 Annual Conference to secure the lowest rates



Our 2025 Annual Conference is coming up on Jan. 10-11 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines, Iowa.

With more than 70 farmer-led sessions, dozens of exhibitor and locally sourced meals, our conference has something for everyone!

Preregister by Jan. 2. After this date, registration rates increase, and all registrations are walk-in only.

[Learn more about the conference and register today.](#)

Registration is now open for the 2025 Midwest Covers and Grains Conference



Mark your calendars for the third annual Midwest Covers and Grains Conference on March 5 at Great Wolf Lodge in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Learn from other farmers and advance your understanding of how diversified rotations and cover crops can work for you.

This one-day event will explore topics on everything from interseeding covers into corn to finding viable market options for small grains. **[Learn more and register.](#)**

Join two PFI on-farm research projects



Are you ready to put your soil health to the test with on-farm research?

We are currently seeking participants for two on-farm research trials. Both trials are compensated.

- Can We Reduce N Rates to Corn and Improve ROI?
- Do Cover Crops Increase the Number of Days Suitable for Field Work?

Enroll in on-farm research today.

IN THE FIELD

Blog: “Incorporating Livestock With Small Grains and Cover Crops: Lessons From a Century Farm”



Learn from **Kevin Prevo** in [this blog](#) recapping his January shared learning call about how he grazes through the fall and winter using a cover crop mix to meet his goals of “winter feed, supplemental grazing and organic matter nutrient cycling.”

Explore the [SmartMix Calculator from Green Cover Seed](#) that he uses to determine the cover crop mix that meets his needs.

Blog: “A Versatile Feed Source”



Small grains offer a viable alternative or addition to corn as livestock feed. They can be grown as feed grain, silage or straw – options that provide economic and risk management benefits.

Read this blog to explore how the nutrient compositions of oats, rye, wheat, triticale and barley compare with corn and learn which small grains are better suited to ruminants versus monogastrics.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Blog post: "**Incorporating Small Grains in Livestock Rations to Achieve Regenerative Agriculture Goals**"
- Video presentation: "**Cropping System Diversity: Effects on Production, Soil Health and Profitability**"

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next shared learning call: "Vertical Integration of Small Grains for a Brewing Business"



Friday, Jan. 17 | Noon - 1 p.m. | Online

Adam Wagner and his father Tim Wagner started growing barley on their family farm and malting for personal use in the mid-2000s. This eventually led to the integration of malt for commercial sale to local breweries and home brewers with their business, Vertical Malt.

Register for our January shared learning call to hear Adam and Tim's process of vertical integration, producing malt from seed to end product.

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central time.

Jan. 22: Field day – Cover Crop 101: Basics of Management, Profitability and Practicality of Crop Use

Host: Chad Petersen

4-6 p.m. | New Liberty, IA

Feb. 7: Shared learning call – Topic: Equipment for planting small grains in spring

Speaker: Jade Estling

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

Friends of PFI events

Jan. 9-10: Conference – Minnesota Organic Conference

Hosted by: Minnesota Department of Agriculture

8 a.m.-3 p.m. | St. Cloud, MN

Jan. 23-25: Conference – Northern Plains Food & Farming Conference

Hosted by: Northern Plains Sustainable Ag

8 a.m.-3 p.m. | Aberdeen, SD

Jan. 24-25: Conference – OGRAIN Winter Conference

Hosted by: Organic Grain Resources and Information Network

Madison, WI

Jan. 28: Conference – Small Grains Winter Workshop: Economic Opportunity in a New Market Environment

Hosted by: Land Stewardship Project
Albert Lea, MN

Jan. 29: Conference – Central Nebraska Soil Health Conference

Hosted by: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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

Feb. 11: Conference – Eastern Nebraska Soil Health Conference

Hosted by: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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

[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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