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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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Winter cereal rye, cover crops and prairie strips are focus of field day at Dick Sloan farm – June 19, near Rowley

ROWLEY, IOWA — Iowa Learning Farms, Practical Farmers of Iowa and the Cedar River Watershed Coalition will host a field day at the farm of Dick and Diana Sloan in Rowley on **Thursday, June 19, from 12:30-3:00 p.m.** Topics covered will include winter cereal rye for grain production; cover crops with and after rye; multi-species cover crops; growing corn after rye and a legume cover crop; and prairie strips.

The event – “Three-Crop Rotations, Cover Crops and Prairie for Conservation” – is free and open to the public, and will include lunch before the program begins. The program will start at the Sloans’ home farm, where they have established strips of prairie species among their cash grain crop fields. It will then move to one of their rye fields a few miles away. The field day is sponsored by Buchanan County Soil and Water Conservation District.

RSVPs are requested for the meal. Please contact Lauren Zastrow with Practical Farmers of Iowa at (515) 232-5661 or lauren@practicalfarmers.org by Monday, June 16. The start and lunch location is at 3046 Harrison Ave., near Rowley, and the end location is at 1531 330th St., near Brandon.

“Cereal rye is not only our most reliable cover crop protecting water quality and soil health,” Dick says, “but it is also a good choice for extending rotations beyond corn and soybeans.”

Dick and Diana Sloan sustain 720 acres of family-owned cropland in the Cedar River watershed in northeastern Iowa. They currently farm using many conservation practices, including no-till farming, tile drainage, grassed waterway buffers, crop terraces, prairie strips and cover crops. They will share their experience in growing winter cereal rye for grain production and using it as a cover crop.

Additional presenters include Iowa State University Extension nutrient specialist Chad Engels, Cedar River Coalition watershed coordinator Mary Beth Stevenson and Natural Resources Conservation Service State Soil Scientist Rick Bednarek.

In addition to the speakers, the Conservation Station will be on display. The Conservation Station features a rainfall simulator that shows the effects that different surfaces from agricultural and urban environments have on the displacement of rainwater.

Directions: Take I-380 to Exit 49 toward Brandon / Buchanan County (exit onto County Road D48 / 330th Street). Note that the farm location for the second half is on the northeast corner of the interchange. Look for the blue Harvestore silo.

To get to the lunch location: From the interchange, head east on CR D48 / 330th Street for 1.5 miles. Turn left (north) on Hamilton Avenue and go about one mile. As Hamilton Avenue begins to turn east, take the first left (north) to stay on Harrison Avenue and continue for 1.5 miles. The home farm is on the right (east) side of the road.

Founded in 1985, Practical Farmers of Iowa is an open, supportive and diverse organization of farmers and friends of farmers, advancing profitable, ecologically sound and community-enhancing approaches to agriculture through farmer-to-farmer networking, farmer-led investigation and information sharing. Farmers in our network produce corn, soybeans, beef cattle, hay, fruits and vegetables, and more. For additional information, call 515.232.5661 or visit www.practicalfarmers.org.

Established in 2004, Iowa Learning Farms is building a Culture of Conservation, encouraging adoption of conservation practices. Farmers, researchers and ILF team members are working together to identify and implement the best management practices that improve water quality and soil health while remaining profitable. Partners of Iowa Learning Farms are the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (USEPA section 319), Conservation Districts of Iowa, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Water Center and Practical Farmers of Iowa. For more information about Iowa Learning Farms, visit the website: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf/>.