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Field day will explore grazing cover crops – April 11, near Lake City

LAKE CITY, Iowa — Practical Farmers of Iowa will host a cover crop grazing field day on Tuesday, April 11, from noon to 3 p.m., near Lake City (1635 365th St., a few miles west of town), at the farm of Mark Schleisman.

Mark farms more than 2,000 acres at M & M Farms, a diversified family farm that includes corn, soybeans, popcorn, popcorn-field-corn hybrid seed, hogs and a cow-calf operation. The family uses cover crops on at least 1,000 acres.

The event – “Grazing Cover Crops” – is free to attend and will start with lunch, supplied by Mark, from noon to 12:30 p.m. **Please RSVP for the meal** to Alisha Bower, alisha@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661.

The event is part of Practical Farmers’ 2017 spring cover crop “caravan” field day series, which features events at locations across Iowa exploring cover crop issues in grazing and row crop systems.

After lunch, guests will head to the field to see Mark’s cows and calves grazing a mix of diverse cover crops planted in late summer 2016. Mark will also share his experience with planting and grazing strategies; cover crops as a nutritional forage source; how he deals with compaction from cattle; and the economic benefits of grazing covers.

“In addition to the soil benefits, grazing cover crops has been a valuable source of fall, winter and spring cow feed,” Mark says.

Producers are also invited to attend a related field day in the morning – “Successful Cover Crop Use in Beef Production” – from 9:30-11:30 a.m., hosted by ISU Extension at the ISU Allee Demonstration Farm near Newell (2030 640th St., about 34 miles northwest of Mark’s farm).

The event is free and will focus on using stocker cattle to graze cereal rye, among other topics. For more details, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org/news/CoverCropBeefFieldDay2017.html. Afterwards, those interested in attending Mark’s field day can travel to M & M Farms for lunch and the grazing cover crops field day.

Directions to M & M Farms: Mark’s farm is located 3 miles west of Lake City on IA Hwy 175, or 4.5 miles east of Auburn on IA Hwy 175; the farm is at the top of the hill on the south side.

Practical Farmers of Iowa’s 2017 spring cover crop field days are supported by Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; Iowa State University Extension; Land Stewardship Project; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota; The Pasture Project; and Unilever.

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Practical Farmers of Iowa strengthens farms and communities through farmer-led investigation and information-sharing. Our values include: welcoming everyone; creativity, collaboration and community; viable farms now and for future generations; and stewardship and ecology. Founded in 1985, farmers in our network raise corn, soybeans, livestock, hay, fruits and vegetables, and more. To learn more, visit <http://practicalfarmers.org>.