



**For Release:** May 17, 2017

**Contacts:**

Liz Juchems | Iowa Learning Farms | (515) 294-5429 | [ilf@iastate.edu](mailto:ilf@iastate.edu) | [iowalearningfarms.org](http://iowalearningfarms.org)

Fred Abels | K & A Acres | (319) 640-2002 | [farmerfred1981@hotmail.com](mailto:farmerfred1981@hotmail.com)

Tamsyn Jones | Practical Farmers of Iowa | (515) 232-5661 | [tamsyn@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:tamsyn@practicalfarmers.org)

## **Field day will explore benefits of combining strip-till and cover crops – June 8, in Holland**

**HOLLAND, Iowa** — Cover crops and strip-tillage are two practices farmers can use to minimize erosion, boost soil health and reduce nutrients entering waterways – and combining the two can augment their benefits.

Fred Abels has been strip-tilling for more than 10 years, using homemade equipment, and incorporating cover crops into his row crop and livestock farm near Holland.

He will share his experience at a Practical Farmers of Iowa field day he is hosting on **Thursday, June 8, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., in Holland.** The event – “Strip-Till and Cover Crop Field Day” – is being held in partnership with Iowa Learning Farms and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and will start with dinner, featuring beef burgers provided by PT Grillers in Morrison, in the shelter at the Holland City Park (located near the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue N and Main Street).

The field day is free and open to all, but **RSVPs are requested for the meal.** Please contact Liz Juchems at (515) 294-5429 or [ilf@iastate.edu](mailto:ilf@iastate.edu).

After dinner and discussion, guests will walk to the field site just north of the park. Fred will share how he has adapted his operation to use strip-till and cover crops together while maintaining yields, and guests will get to see strip-tillage equipment. Other speakers will include Mark Hanna, agricultural engineer with ISU Extension, and Sarah Carlson, Midwest cover crops director with Practical Farmers of Iowa.

Fred says he wants to show attendees how it’s possible to start using strip-tillage on a low budget. “You don’t need to buy a new or used strip-tillage implement to get into strip-till,” he says. “I’ve been using a homemade strip-tillage implement for over 10 years and got it where it does a nice job of preparing a clean, black strip of soil to plant into – and I planted into 200 bushel-an-acre corn residue with a winter rye cover crop.”

Fred Abels and his wife, Vicki, farm about 400 acres at K & A Acres Inc. Fred acquired the farm from his uncle in the late-1970s after working for other farmers for a few years. In addition to corn and soybeans, he has a cow-calf herd that he rotationally grazes. He uses several conservation practices to protect his soil, local waterways and wildlife, including no-till, strip-till, cover crops, the Conservation Reserve Program and grass waterways, among others.

**Directions:** The field day will start at the Holland City Park, near the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue N and Main Street, near the ball diamond. After dinner and discussion, the group will walk to the field, which is just 1.5 blocks east of the park.

Practical Farmers’ 2017 field days are supported by several sustaining and major sponsors, including: Ag Ventures Alliance; Albert Lea Seed; Center for Rural Affairs; Fertrell; Gandy Cover Crop Seeders; Grain Millers, Inc.; Iowa Beef Center; Iowa Environmental Council; Iowa State University Department of Agronomy; Iowa Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE); ISU Extension and Outreach; La Crosse Forage and Turf Seed; Lemken; Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; MOSA Organic Certification; Natural Resources Defense Council; Organic Valley / Organic Prairie; Riverside Feeds, LLC; The Scoular Company; Trees Forever; Unilever; University of Iowa College of

Public Health (I-CASH); Upper Iowa Audubon Society; USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service; Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture; and Welter Seed & Honey Co.

###

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>.

Established in 2004, Iowa Learning Farms has become a trusted source of conservation information and research while helping to build a Culture of Conservation by 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.