Learning From On-Farm Research: PFI's Cooperators' Program

Carmen Black – Sundog Farm & Local Harvest CSA

Rob Faux – Genuine Faux Farm

Liz Kolbe – Horticulture Coordinator, Practical Farmers of Iowa

Jan. 20, 2018





MISSION:

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.





Cooperators' Program

Since 1987...

PFI's vehicle for conducting on-farm research on the issues and concerns deemed most important by our members.

Goal: Make sure practical and farmer-directed on-farm research is conducted and shared with other farmers in lowa, the Midwest and beyond.



Since 1987....

230 cooperators have conducted... 1,259 on-farm trials

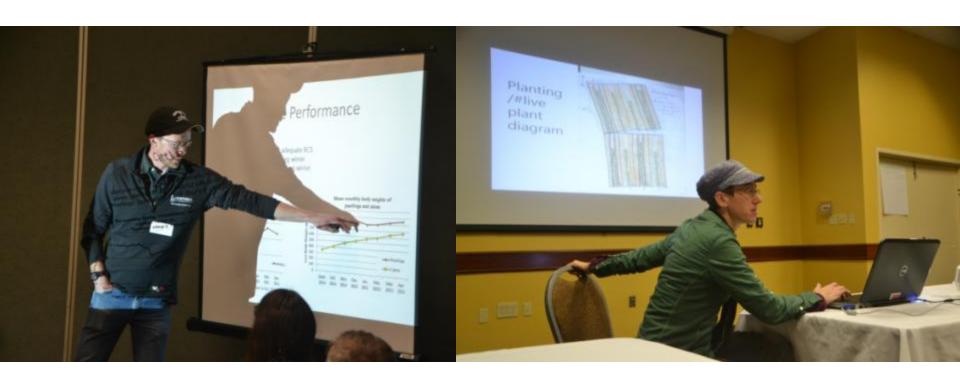


Cooperators' Meeting

- Annual, 2-day meeting in December.
- By invitation only.
- Very much a working meeting for those attending.
 - Reporting
 - 2. Knowledge gaps & project ideas
 - 3. Project design



1. Farmer-researchers present on past year's findings.





2. Identify knowledge gaps & new projects





3. Project design





4. Implement new trials on-farm



5 (1. again). Farmer-researchers present on past year's findings.





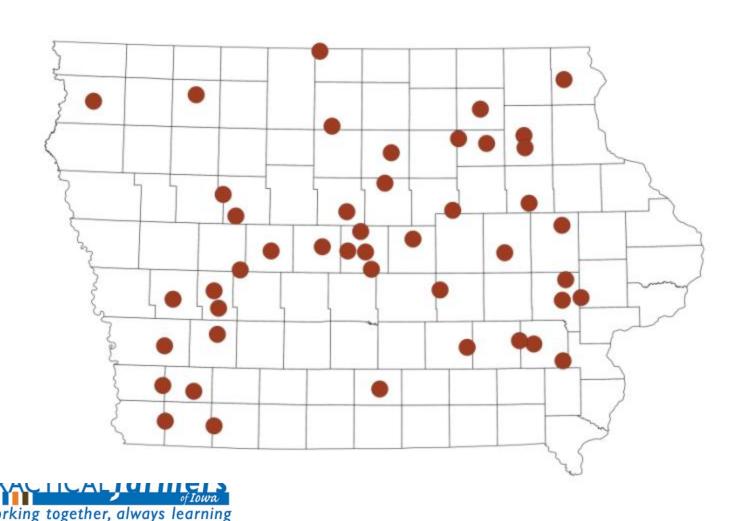
In 2017...

51 cooperators took part in...71 on-farm trials





Project Locations, 2017



Rolling Cover Crops –

Tim Sieren, Scott Shriver, Jack Boyer

Can rolling covers provide better weed control and reduce costs in my soybeans?







Summer Lettuce Variety Trial –

Jill Beebout, Carmen Black, Rob Faux, Kate Edwards, Alice McGary, Jordan Scheibel

This trial encouraged us to experiment with varieties we hadn't used before, and we had success. These varieties filled a void in our CSA and market offerings.



Monitoring Birds in Rotationally Grazed Pasture Bruce Carney

"Why are bobolinks coming to my 300 acres where there are 10,000 acres in a wildlife conservation area a quarter mile away?"



Underseeded vs. Mid-Summer-Seeded Green Manure Cover Crops-

Vic Madsen, Doug Alert, Margaret Smith

Which will provide more N to the succeeding corn crop?





Grazing Cover Crops in Cow-Calf Operations –

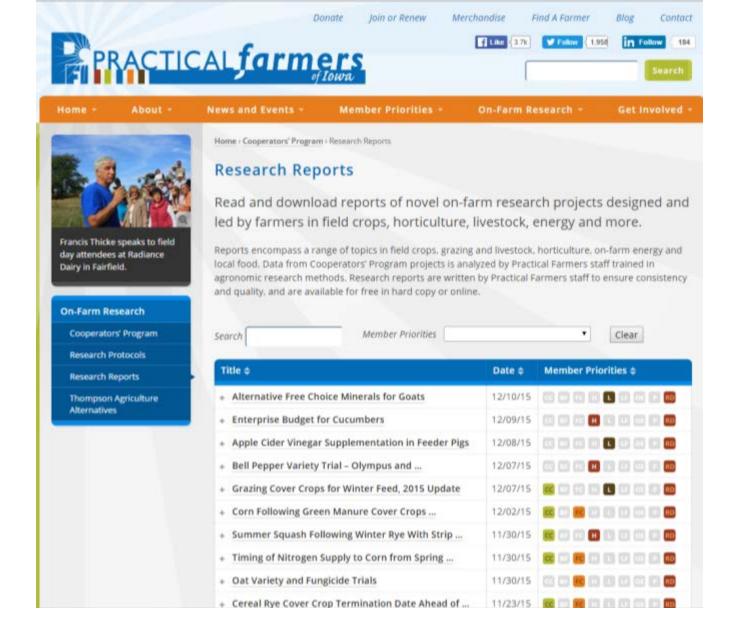
Wesley Degner, Bill Frederick, Mark Schleisman

"When cattle are out grazing covers, we don't have to feed cows, which can save us money."









http://practicalfarmers.org → On-Farm Research → Research Reports

On-farm researchers...

- Are curious about observations made on the farm
- Have questions about production practices
- Set project designs and parameters
- Collect and record data
- Share findings with other farmers
- Generate new questions
 & experiments!



How to get involved...



Stefan Gailans, field crops stefan@practicalfarmers.org



Liz Kolbe, horticulture liz@practicalfarmers.org



Meghan Filbert, livestock meghan@practicalfarmers.org