

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

Carmen Black – Sundog Farm & Local Harvest CSA

Rob Faux – Genuine Faux Farm

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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 Iowa, 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.
 1. 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.



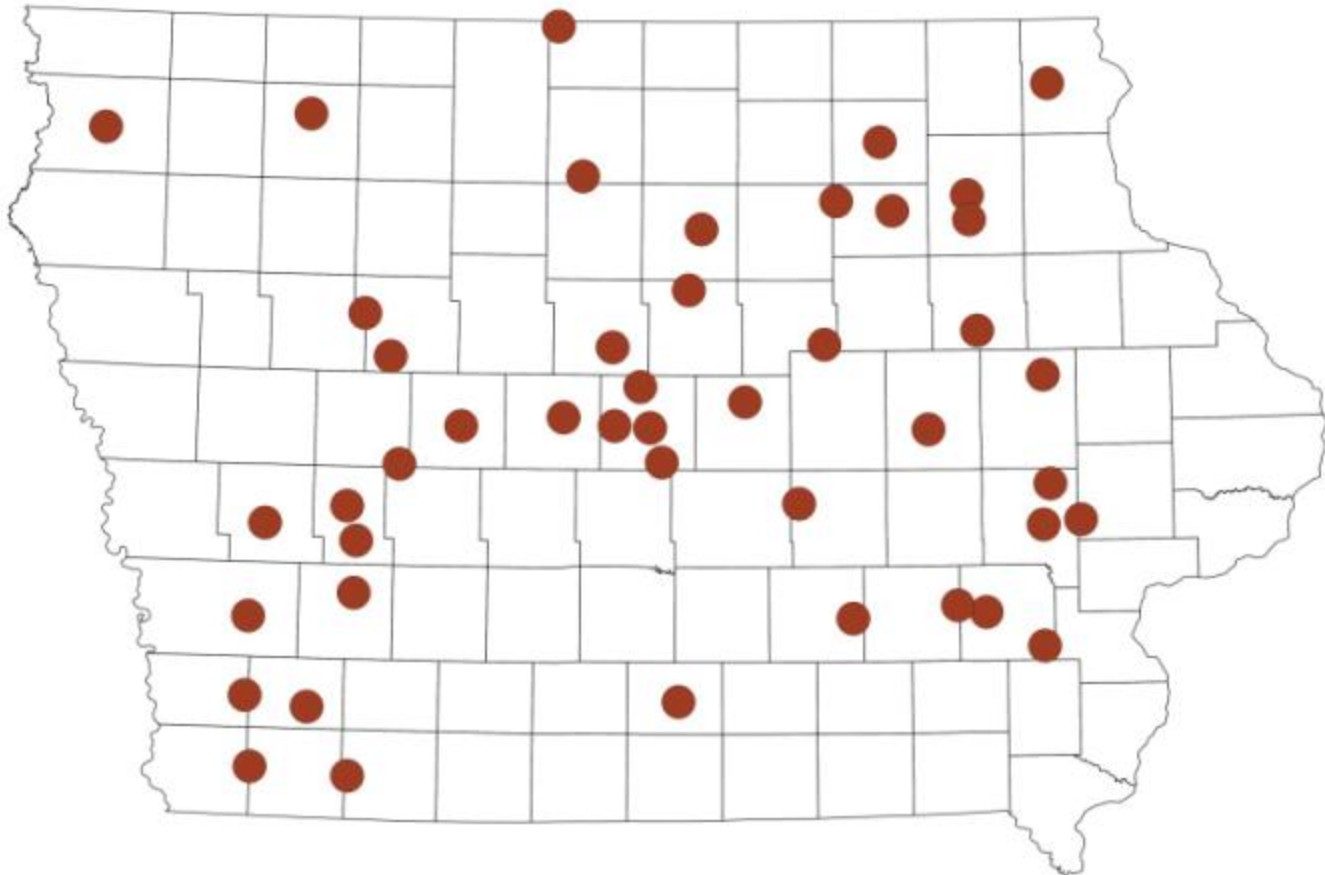
In 2017...

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.”





Francis Thicke speaks to field day attendees at Radiance Dairy in Fairfield.

On-Farm Research

- [Cooperators' Program](#)
- [Research Protocols](#)
- [Research Reports](#)
- [Thompson Agriculture Alternatives](#)

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Research Reports

Read and download reports of novel on-farm research projects designed and led by farmers in field crops, horticulture, livestock, energy and more.

Reports encompass a range of topics in field crops, grazing and livestock, horticulture, on-farm energy and local food. Data from Cooperators' Program projects is analyzed by Practical Farmers staff trained in agronomic research methods. Research reports are written by Practical Farmers staff to ensure consistency and quality, and are available for free in hard copy or online.

Search *Member Priorities*

Title	Date	Member Priorities
+ Alternative Free Choice Minerals for Goats	12/10/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Enterprise Budget for Cucumbers	12/09/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Apple Cider Vinegar Supplementation in Feeder Pigs	12/08/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Bell Pepper Variety Trial – Olympus and ...	12/07/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Grazing Cover Crops for Winter Feed, 2015 Update	12/07/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Corn Following Green Manure Cover Crops ...	12/02/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Summer Squash Following Winter Rye With Strip ...	11/30/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Timing of Nitrogen Supply to Corn from Spring ...	11/30/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Oat Variety and Fungicide Trials	11/30/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO
+ Cereal Rye Cover Crop Termination Date Ahead of ...	11/23/15	CC MR FC H L LP DR P RO

<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...



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