
Practical Cover Cropper - Join a PFI research trial by March 15 + Iowa Cover Crop business highlight

From Beth Waage <beth.waage@practicalfarmers.org>

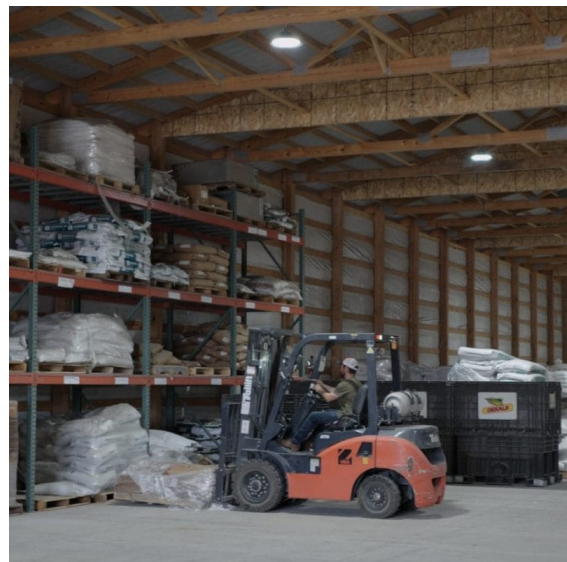
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To Anna Pesek <anna.pesek@practicalfarmers.org>



March 2025

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Starting a cover crop business with Iowa Cover Crop

A new venture: Farmers **Bill Frederick and James Holz** started Iowa Cover Crop in 2014 with a goal of positively contributing to their local community and Iowa agriculture. Based in Jefferson, Iowa, Bill and James started by selling rye, oats and wheat. Iowa Cover Crop is now a full-service cover crop business offering cover crop seed and application, native seeds and grasses and a growing network of farmer seed dealers across Iowa and beyond. [Hear about their experience starting the business.](#)

Opportunity arises from disaster: In December 2021, a tornado razed the Greene County facilities they were renting for their cover crop business. In this video that includes footage from 2021 and 2024, Bill shares the story of how they embraced the opportunity to rebuild amidst the challenges following the storm. [Watch how Iowa Cover Crop has recovered and rebuilt for resiliency.](#)

PROGRAM UPDATES

Enroll in a research trial by March 15



Are you ready to put your soil health to the test with on-farm research?

PFI is currently seeking participants for two on-farm research trials. Both trials are compensated.

- Can We Reduce N Rates to Corn and Improve ROI?
- Do Cover Crops Increase the Number of Days Suitable for Field Work?

[Deadline to enroll for both trials is March 15, 2025.](#)

Safeguard lower inputs with our N Rate Risk Protection Program



Are you thinking of lowering your nitrogen rate in your 2025 corn crop?

With PFI's N Rate Risk Protection Program, you'll consult with a PFI agronomist and receive field-specific advice to help you decide the right reduction rate for your farm.

This program lets you experiment with lower nitrogen rates while saving money and boosting land stewardship.

[Enroll in the program today.](#)

IN THE FIELD

Research report: "Terminating Cover Crops After Seeding Soybeans"



In 2021, **Dick Sloan** compared weed pressure, yield and profitability between soybeans with a cover crop terminated six days before planting and soybeans with a cover crop terminated 26 days after planting.

This trial followed six years of trials by other PFI farmers to determine how late they can delay the termination date of cover crops relative to planting soybeans.

[Read the research results.](#)

Research report: "Corn Planting Date Following Cover Crop Termination: Can Corn Be Planted Into a Freshly Terminated Cover Crop?"



Yield drag and seedling diseases in corn planted fewer than 10 days after terminating cover crops can delay corn planting beyond the recommended dates for maximum yield.

Farmers **Wade Dooley** and **Dick Sloan** conducted a research trial to see if corn could be planted into freshly terminated cover crops.

[Review the research results.](#)

Video: "Termination Dates for Cereal Rye in Soybeans"



In this virtual field day from 2020, **Sam Bennett** and **Jon Bakehouse** discuss their experiences and findings from trials investigating delayed termination of cereal rye in soybeans.

They discuss their motivations in conducting on-farm research and explain how their original research questions evolved into an ongoing trial looking at the impacts of not terminating cereal rye and leaving it to reseed itself. [Revisit this virtual field day.](#)

Additional resources

- Cover Crop Strategies: ["A Guide to Terminating Cover Crops"](#)
- Pennsylvania State Extension: ["Terminating Winter Cover Crops in Organic Crops"](#)
- Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service video: ["Cover Crop Termination and Weed Suppression"](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Webinar: "Optimal Nitrogen Fertilizer Rates for Corn"



Tuesday, March 11 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

This webinar will be a great prelude to the growing season ahead. Iowa State University professor **Sotirios Archontoulis** will discuss the results of new research on the optimal nitrogen fertilizer rate for corn.

He'll also discuss how plant population, hybrids, soil and weather can all affect the optimal rate, and what that can mean for corn and grain yields. [Register for this webinar.](#)

Webinar: "The Advantages of Cover Crops"



Tuesday, March 25 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Kristin and Pat Duncanson, of Highland Family Farms, have a goal of making sure future generations have productive soil to farm.

When they first considered planting covers, they weren't sure if it was going to work for them. In this webinar, Kristin and Pat will discuss the challenges and successes they've had adding cover crops to their rotation.

[Register for this webinar.](#)

Friends of PFI events

March 11-12: Conference – [Annual Grazing Conference](#)

*Hosted by: Illinois Grazing Lands Coalition
Springfield, IL*

March 13: Virtual Field Day – [Evaluating Rotations of Cover Crops and Summer Annual Forages](#)

*Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms
1-2 p.m. | [Online](#)*

March 19-20: Summit – [Midwest Grazing and Soil Health Summit](#)

*Hosted by: Sustainable Farming Association
Willmar, MN*

March 12: Webinar – [N-Fact: A New Decision Support System for N Fertilizer Management from the Iowa Nitrogen Initiative](#)

*Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)*

March 19: Webinar – [Strategic Farming 2025: Let's Talk Drones](#)

*Hosted by: University of Minnesota Extension
9-10 a.m. | [Online](#)*

March 20: Webinar – [Cover Crops, Can They Work for Your Farm?](#)

*Hosted by: Center for Rural Affairs
10-11 a.m. | [Online](#)*

[View our events calendar](#)

[Contact our team](#)

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Chat with our cover crops team by calling the PFI office at (515)-232-5661.

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