
Small Grains News - Enroll in a research trial + Managing spring-seeded small grains

From Solveig Orngard <solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org>

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



March 2025

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Keeping soil covered with winter-hardy crops

Graham Adsit farms near East Troy, Wisconsin, where he grows hard and soft wheat, multiple types of corn, oats, millet, sorghum, barley, heritage small grains, soybeans, peas, canola and buckwheat. He also operates a grain mill called Rooster Milling, which processes all types of grain to customer specification, including cleaning, color sorting, milling, crushing, flaking and malting.

Making the most of rotations: Graham's farm is a split operation with both organic and non-organic acres. He makes a point of including small grains in all his field rotations. He follows a corn-soy-corn-soy-small grain rotation for non-organic acres and a corn-rye-legume or buckwheat rotation on organic acres, double-cropping rye and its following crop. Graham says, "Half my organic acres are a small grain at any given time. I try to get three crops in two years and have sort of continuous cover over the entire farm, including non-organic acres."

Winter canola: An advocate of winter-hardy crops, Graham recommends adding canola into rotations, because it pairs well with small grains. It can be planted in late August or early September following a small grain crop. Canola's harvest time will be the following August, a couple of weeks after small grain harvest, spreading out the summer workload.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Deadline extended: Enroll in a nitrogen reduction research trial by March 31



Reducing your reliance on nitrogen fertilizer can help improve water quality, reduce agriculture's carbon footprint and **improve your farm's bottom line.**

For this research trial, you will compare two nitrogen fertilizer rates applied to corn in a replicated strip trial. One rate will be your typical nitrogen rate; the other will be a reduced rate of your choosing.

The new deadline to enroll in this trial is March 31.

Did you know you can couple participating in this research trial with enrolling in our **N Rate Risk Protection Program?**

This program offers support from a PFI agronomist to help you decide how much to reduce your nitrogen rate. It also offers a risk protection payment of \$35 per acre if your yield drops after reducing your typical rate. **Enroll today.**

New blog post: "Vertical Integration for Future Growth of a Malting Operation"



Vertical Malt in Crookston, Minnesota, is a vertically integrated farm and malting operation that adds value to barley for selling to breweries and distilleries.

In this blog recap of our January shared learning call, learn how Vertical Malt president **Adam Wagner** grows, cleans, malts and cures barley. You'll also find his tips for starting a new venture.

[Read the full blog.](#)

Share ideas for the 2025 Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day



PFI is excited to partner with The Land Connection and Glacial Drift Enterprises to bring the [Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day](#) to Ames, Iowa, on Aug. 20, 2025. This regional event includes education and field demonstrations featuring mechanical weed control equipment for vegetable and field crop production.

Planning is underway, and we invite your input. What equipment, demos, speakers or topics would you like to see? [Share your ideas.](#)

IN THE FIELD

Video: "Seeding Rates and Depth Test for Drilling Oats"



Wade Dooley, farmer and owner of Dooley Ag Stewardship says, "Seeding rates change crop to crop, year to year, season to season."

In this video, Wade talks about calculating seeding rate and testing depth when co-seeding oats and clover. He also demonstrates how to use a seed depth tool for additional confidence when planting.

[Watch the video.](#)

Blog: "Incorporating Oats in Extended Rotations"



For **Ben and Kristi Dwire** of Arco, Minnesota, oats are key to improving soil quality, maintaining soil coverage and spreading out risk in a year on the farm.

Revisit this shared learning call recap blog to find Ben's tips for growing oats, from variety selection to drill calibration and seeding to harvest. Learn why Ben advocates for using seed firmer and rolling basket drill attachments at planting.

[Read the blog.](#)

Video: "How Do Small Grains Grow and Develop? Harnessing This Knowledge to Improve Management"



If you missed our winter webinar in February with Hampton, Iowa, farmer and Albert Lea Seed Forage Agronomist **Margaret Smith**, you can access the recording online.

Get oriented with the agronomic essentials of both winter and spring small grains. Learn about their physiology, growth and development, and find out how to identify growth stages that are key for management interventions.

[Watch the presentation.](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Video: **["Drill Spacing When Seeding Oats and Clover"](#)**
- 2016 PFI Annual Conference Presentation: **["Basics of Spring Wheat and Barley Production in North Dakota"](#)**
- 2020 Research Report: **["Early-Season Mechanical Weed Control in Oats"](#)**
- Video: **["Crop Rotation for Weed Suppression – Organic Weed Control"](#)**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Shared learning call: "Preventing and Managing Disease in Oats"



Friday, April 11 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

As oats begin their next season of growth, awareness of how Fusarium functions in other small grains can help farmers assess and manage disease risk.

During this shared learning call, University of Minnesota Extension Small Grain Specialist **Jochum Wiersma** will offer tips to help farmers plan ahead to try to prevent disease prevalence and approaches for

handling the crop when diseases do appear. [Register today.](#)

Friends of PFI events

April 7-9: Conference – [Green Lands, Blue Waters CLC Conference 2025](#)

Hosted by: Green Lands Blue Waters
Madison, WI

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

Solveig Orngard
Field Crops Education Coordinator
solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org

Chat with any of us by calling the PFI office at (515)232-5661.

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1615 Golden Aspen Dr Suite 101

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