



## August 2020 Newsletter

### Looking into the Future

#### **8/15 9-2:30 Cover Crop Production Field Day**

Rain or shine - save the date! Join our Coalition Coordinator, Jennifer Hahn, and the Goodhue SWCD for an information-packed Cover Crop Production Field Day. This event will be hosted at Ed & Jane McNamara's farm in Goodhue, MN. Topics include: Local Producer Panel discussion, Cover Crop Crimping, Planting 60" Rows for Inter-seeding Cover Crops, Inter-seeding Cover Crop, Managing Manure with Cover Crop Demonstration. Note: COVID-19 health and safety measures will be in place during the field day event. In an effort to keep attendees safe, we are limiting registration numbers. Registration for this event available at <https://www.goodhueswcd.org/>. Registration fee of \$10 includes a box lunch from Meatheads Meat & Deli of Red Wing, proceedings, refreshments, and required facemask. For more information, please call the Goodhue SWCD Office at 651-923-5286

#### **8/18 1-2:30pm U of MN Extension Cover Crop Virtual Day: Setting Up for Success**

Through this live webinar, researchers and educators will highlight research at the U that provides tips and considerations to help farmers and ag professionals successfully incorporate cover crops into Minnesota cropping systems. Presentations will run from 1:00 to 2:00 followed by a cover crop roundtable from 2:00 to 2:30. Registration is free, thanks to the MN SARE program. For more information and to register, go to: <https://extension.umn.edu/event/cover-crop-virtual-field-day-setting-success> If you cannot attend in person, a recording of the session will be made available through the above website at a later date.

#### **8/18 7-9pm 40 Plus Years of Cover Crop Experience with David Brandt**

David Brandt will share his extensive knowledge of how to integrate cover crops into a corn-soybean rotation. Do not miss the chance to learn from one of the most experienced farmers in the world! David Brandt farms 1,150 acres in central Ohio's Fairfield County. He began no-till farming in 1971 and has been using cover crops since 1978. David has participated in yield plots for corn, soybeans and wheat into various covers. To register, visit: <https://understandingag.com/webinars>

#### **8/21 11-12pm Fridays on the Farm with Craig Mold**

The Minnesota Soil Health Coalition is hosting the Fridays on the Farm series this summer in partnership with MN NRCS, Redwood SWCD, Renville SWCD, MOSH, and University of Minnesota Extension. This session will feature farmer Craig Mold of East Central Minnesota. Tune in at our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mnsoilhealth/> | No pre-registration required.

#### **8/21 9-4pm 2nd Annual Soil Health Field Day**

RAIN OR SHINE, join us at Maple Grove Farms to learn how Jon Stevens has used soil health practices to reduce stress and improve economics on his diverse Pine County farm. We will have the rainfall simulator, "soil your undies," equipment modifications, and many more demonstrations. This year will include a cover crop species test plot and more livestock discussion. Learn how soil health farming can work in east-central Minnesota. This event will have guest speakers from: local farms, NRCS, UMN, and the Sustainable Farming Association. Maple Grove Farms, 10815 555th St., Rush City, MN 55069

\*RSVP REQUIRED: Call/text 218-451-6118 | Need special accommodations? Contact Shannon Rasinski at 320-674-3012

#### **8/27 8-9:30pm Film on the Farm**

Rice SWCD & NRCS partner up to host a "drive-in" movie night for area farmers to view several short films showcasing the use of conservation tillage and cover crops by producers in southern MN. Films to be shown during *Film on the Farm* include *Hugh Hammond Bennett: The Story of America's Private Land Conservation Movement* by NRCS, *No-Till Farming with Corn and Cover Crops in Southeastern Minnesota* by Minnesota NRCS, *High Clearance Cover Crop Seeder with Andy Linder* by MN NRCS, *Growing No-Till Corn Silage and Cover Crops for Dairy in Southeastern Minnesota* by MN NRCS and *Studying My Soil: A Continuous Education through Trial and Error* (featuring Dave Legvold, Rice County farmer) by Strip-Till Farmer Magazine. Films will be projected and the audio for the movies will be broadcast to each vehicle using an FM transmitter. Funded by MOSH, MN BWSR, MN NRCS, & the Tri-Lakes Sportsman Club. Attendees are asked to bring their own beverage. A bag of popcorn will be provided. There will be no on-site restrooms so attendees should plan accordingly. Due to limited space, reservations are required. Reserve your ticket by registering at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/film-on-the-farm-tickets-115233117356> or by contacting the Rice SWCD at 507-332-5408. Where: Larry Conrad Farm, 10214 Baseline Road, Dundas.

## Still Looking into the Future

### **9/2 7-9PM Park the Plow: Tillage, Cover Crops, and Clean Water**

Discover how area farmers are improving soil health, farm profitability, and water quality by using Strip-till, No-till, and cover crops. View reduced tillage and interseeding equipment and talk to farmers and company representatives. The event is free, but registration is required. To register visit [www.crowp.net](http://www.crowp.net) and click the "Register Now Here". Registration deadline is Thursday, Aug. 27 th. Attendees will be in their vehicles to hear presenters with slides projected on Dave's shed wall. Space allows for about 25 vehicles, register early. You only need to register once for all of the people in your car. Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 Guidelines will be followed, including the wearing of cloth masks and maintaining a 6-foot distance from non-family members. Sponsors will provide reusable cloth masks, bottled water and popcorn, and the first 25 attendees will receive a water nitrate test kit free. Where: Dave & Mark Legvold Farm, 5103 315th Street W, Northfield, MN 55057

### **9/4 11-12pm Fridays on the Farm with Tim Little**

The Minnesota Soil Health Coalition is hosting the Fridays on the Farm series this summer in partnership with MN NRCS, Redwood SWCD, Renville SWCD, MOSH, and University of Minnesota Extension. This session will feature farmer Tim Little of southeast MN. Tune in at our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mnsoilhealth/> | No pre-registration required.

### **9/9 9-2:30PM Soil Health Expo**

The Rollofson family is holding a unique and educational Soil Health Expo near Barrett, MN to discuss and demonstrate soil health management tactics being implemented in west-central MN. The Expo is a collaboration between the Rollofson family, Grant Soil and Water Conservation District, the University of Minnesota – Extension, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Pomme de Terre River Association. Learn how to economically integrate no-till, strip-till, and cover crops into your system from experienced farmers. Topics include soil fertility, nutrient management, how to integrate cover crops into reduced till operations, and the true cost of field erosion. A farmer panel will discuss the challenges that local producers face when striving to improve soil health. Plus, watch some equipment get dirty in the side-by-side demonstrations presented by regional and national manufacturers of cover crop interseeders, strip-till implements, and no-till planters. There is no cost to attend the event. However, pre-registration is requested to help with meals, grounds planning, and updates concerning changes in the agenda. Register now for the Soil Health Expo <https://extension.umn.edu/event/soil-health-expo>

Where: The Soil Health Expo is located two miles west of Barrett, Minnesota on County Road #2. The latitude/longitude is 45.901546, -95.826897

### **9/10 9-5:30PM & 9/11 8-3:30PM Soil Health School**

A two day training designed to provide introduction to intermediate effective information on how to get started implementing soil health practices as well as a deeper look into management options and integrating regenerative practices. Classroom and field learning will be provided, hear from Minnesota farmers implementing soil health practices as well as technical experts from the state. Discussion sessions will be provided to hear from and ask questions from farmers to learn about their successes and challenges as they've implemented soil health practices. Who Should Attend? Farmers, agronomists, technical staff, those interested in learning more. Deadline to register is 8/21! To register, visit <https://mnsoilhealth.org/event/soil-health-school/>

### **9/17 2-5PM SW MN Field Day**

Nancy and Jerry Ackermann are partnering with the Heron Lake Watershed District and Minnesota Department of Agriculture to host a field day! Data and testing have been collected over a three-year period to help measure and determine the benefits of using cover crop strip-till management versus conventional tillage. The field day will consist of cover crop seed mix demonstrations by Jerry Ackermann, a demonstration of the rainfall simulator showing runoff and infiltration rates for various management types by Jennifer Hahn (MNSHC), and soil temperature and moisture test results tests by Catherine Wegehaupt of Heron Lake Watershed District. Where: Nancy and Jerry Ackermann's 39750 820 th Street Lakefield, MN 56150

### **9/18 11-12pm Fridays on the Farm with Matt & Bruce Tiffany**

The Minnesota Soil Health Coalition is hosting the Fridays on the Farm series this summer in partnership with MN NRCS, Redwood SWCD, Renville SWCD, MOSH, and University of Minnesota Extension. This session will feature farmers Matt & Bruce Tiffany of southwest MN. Tune in at our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mnsoilhealth/> | No pre-registration required.

Find these events on our website

<https://mnsoilhealth.org/events/>

And Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/mnsoilhealth/>

Want to promote your event through our  
monthly newsletter?

Email us at [assistant@mnsoilhealth.org](mailto:assistant@mnsoilhealth.org)!

## OUT IN THE FIELD

### When to Plant? That is the Question

Fall is right around the corner and getting planning done now can save you a headache later this year. There are many options for planting cover crops with timing, species, herbicides, etc but there are some later in the year options that we've noticed success on.

Flying on or broadcasting covers into corn the middle of August until harvest has been done with mixed results. Moisture is everything, without it, you won't even grow water hemp! Soil to seed contact is important and when we're using larger seeds, they have a harder time germinating on the soil surface. Typically this is a decent time to get cereal (winter) rye out in the fields to get it established before winter giving us protection in the fall through spring. Broadcasting prior to harvesting corn helps by getting the seed under the residue to help it germinate and provide moisture, and protection from wind and water.

We have noticed weak stands when moisture is low and the frost comes early with this method. The downside to not getting the seed into the ground is when we have warm spell for a week or two during the winter which can cause the cereal rye to germinate because it has such a low germination temperature - 34F! The corn residue can help to insulate the seed but we noticed this spring thin stands where it was just broadcasted. The cereal rye emergence was stronger where snow was banked because it provided more protection from the warm ups we had. The rest of the field eventually caught up and was growing strong when it came time to plant soybeans. This didn't provide very tall stands of cereal rye at planting time which can be great for beginning!

To get the optimal growth from your cereal rye, planting early or getting it in the ground after harvest gives the best results. Seeding after harvest provides excellent protection for the seed from winter warmups and sets the seed up for success when it is time to grow. The downside? Extremely limited or no fall growth. The following spring you will have a nice stand though.

You'll want to determine what your objectives are before determining your seeding method and timing. If you're planting a mix look at the seed sizes to determine if broadcasting will yield the results you're looking for. Also, know if the species are cool or warm season - you don't want to be planting a warm season cover crop yet this year as we are knocking on falls door!

You can find more resources on cover crops on our website at <https://mnsoilhealth.org/technical-information/> or ask a farmer mentor <https://mnsoilhealth.org/mentor/>



Broadcasted cereal rye



Incorporated cereal rye

Want to show others that you're a soil health advocate? Hats and other merchandise are now available to purchase on our website!

<https://mnsoilhealth.org/shop/>







## BACKYARD BIOLOGY

### Protecting Soil with Rain Gardens

Aside from producers, residents can also help to manage stormwater runoff. To do this, consider embellishing landscaping with plants that not only love water, but also can collect and retain lots of stormwater as a result of deep root systems. Rain gardens can exist in a wide variety of shapes and sizes and typically consist of a “bowl” filled with water-loving plants like swamp milkweed, blue flag iris, or purple coneflower. The bowl shape collects rainwater which is then absorbed by the water-loving plants. Rain gardens have a multitude of benefits for both homeowners and the environment.



Photo Source: <https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/rain-gardens>

Benefits include:

- stormwater collection*
- filtration of pollutants*
- healthier soil*
- prevention of soil erosion*
- mitigation of storm flooding*
- increased biodiversity*

What a beautiful way to protect our resources! To find out more, visit our friends at the UMN Extension at <https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/rain-gardens>

## What's new with MNSHC?

August is typically an active time for MNSHC with the hustle and bustle of field days and community learning. However, as we continue to face a global pandemic, more and more events are moving to a more virtual format. MNSHC is no exception; we've been busy bringing outreach events live to Facebook in order to continue our mission of producer-driven education.

**Fridays on the Farm** – This is an event series in collaboration with NRCS, UMN Extension, and SWCD's from Redwood and Renville Counties. This series takes place every other Friday, with the next session on August 21st. Our July events were hosted by Holly Hatlewick, District Manager of the Renville County SWCD, and our Coordinator, Jennifer Hahn. Holly and Jennifer talk to mentor farmers across the state about soil health on their farm fields. Don't worry if you missed it – you can check out the first two session videos at <https://www.mnsoilhealth.org/videos>

...and check out our upcoming sessions on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/mnsoilhealth/>

-August 21, 2020 at 11 am: Craig Mold (east central MN)  
 -September 4, 2020 at 11 am: Tim Little (southeast MN)  
 -September 18, 2020 at 11 am: Matt & Bruce Tiffany (southwest MN)  
 \*Events will be hosted virtually via Facebook Live.



From left: Ben Dwire, Holly Hatlewick



From left: Jennifer Hahn, Nathan Stelling, Eric Stelling



From left: Kyle Dallefeld, Karl Dallefeld, Jennifer Hahn, Dawn Striegel, Jamie Labat, Amanda Rollins

**MNSHC/PCS Virtual Field Day** – This event was a partnership between MNSHC and Prairie Creek Seed (PCS) and took place on July 25<sup>th</sup>. The virtual field day featured four different information sessions, each with a different focus: 1) Soil Health, 2) Cover Crop Pastures, 3) Oats & Clover, and 4) Planting Green. Speakers include Jennifer Hahn and mentor farmer Jamie Labat as well as Dawn Striegel, Amanda Rollins, and Kyle & Karl Dallefeld from PCS. Check out the four session videos at <https://www.mnsoilhealth.org/videos>

The Soil Your Undies Challenge is underway, remember to dig up, take a picture, and post on FB of how well you soiled your undies for a chance to win a prize and be the reigning soiled undies champion!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/3266719926681052/>





## BABE'S COUNTRY

### Alley Cropping with Perennial Nut Trees

Alley cropping with nut trees can add more economic value to a farm while establishing more roots for soil health. This system can add medium-term value with nut harvests while timber can add additional long-term value. In Iowa, Tom Wall of Red Fern Farm farms about 87 acres with just 10 of those acres dedicated to mature chestnut trees. With the emergency of “pick-your-own” farms, Tom states he can make about \$10,000 per acre with minimal added work because, as Tom shares in an interview with University of Missouri’s Center for Agroforestry, “the customers do just about all the work and the only thing I have to do is mow the grass under the chestnuts before the nuts start dropping and then collect money,” (University of Missouri, 2019).

However, according to Dr. Michael Gold, Associate Director of the Center for Agroforestry, it is important to design plantings in a way that encourages synergy below-ground as opposed to competition. During a presentation at the Agroforestry Academy held at the University of Missouri, Dr. Gold states this can be accomplished by selecting species that compliment each other either in time or in space. For example, winter wheat is an ideal companion for alley cropping with chestnut trees. This is because chestnuts are typically harvested in early October and winter wheat is sown in the fall. By selecting two varieties that are synergist in time, this system can operate in harmony. Synergy can also occur through spacing. Dr. Gold recollects a field where observed “the corn [was] protecting the walnut when the walnuts [were] just seedlings so it [was] actually like a reverse windbreak situation for the first couple years,” (University of Missouri, 2019).

Not only does this careful planning prevent competition, it also helps to manage pests as a result of increased biodiversity. and fosters a relatively closed-loop system by allowing nutrients to be recycled. It is in these ways that alley cropping can help farmers promote soil health while accessing new revenue streams.

Resource cited: University of Missouri. (June 21, 2019). Tree-based Polycultures. *The Agroforestry Podcast*. Podcast retrieved from <http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/pubs/podcast.php>

## Meet a Minnesota Soil Health Coalition Mentor!

### Jamie Labat— *Southwest Minnesota*



I grew up on a diversified grain and livestock farm located in Lyon County, MN that historically practiced conservation tillage. I work full time off the farm and raise wheat, oats, corn, soybeans, and hay over the years. I recently began using cereal rye and other cover crops on my row crop and small grain acres and will be implementing cover crop mixes across every acre this growing season and on. Growing triticale for seed is a new addition for 2019.

I successfully attempted my first field of no-till soybeans in 2013 and corn in 2015, of course learning on the fly was a bit trying but I’m very happy with the results and my goal of 100% no till is nearly reached. I also have a small free-range flock of laying hens and a Angus based cow/calf herd rotational grazing grass and cover crops.

To connect with Jamie or any one of our other mentors, please visit <https://www.mnsoilhealth.org/mentor>

To hear more from Jamie on soil health at <https://www.mnsoilhealth.org/videos>

#### Contact

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