



## July 2020 Newsletter

### Looking into the Future

#### **Fridays on the Farm Series July 10, July 24, August 7, August 21, September 4, & September 18**

Join us for a fun virtual field day tour of farmers from around the state! They will be held every other Friday this summer and will be interactive to allow you to hear from the farmers and ask questions! A collaboration with NRCS, MOSH, Extension, Renville SWCD, Lincoln SWCD and Redwood SWCD to provide field days while staying healthy, [https://www.facebook.com/pg/mnsoilhealth/events/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/mnsoilhealth/events/?ref=page_internal)

#### **7/23 9:30-1 Soil Health Field Day**

The Wilkin SWCD has teamed up with NRCS to offer you a morning full of information on soil health including Soil Compaction, Salinity, Soil Pit, Tools used to assess the soil, Hands on demonstrations on how to use these tools and simple soil tests, Rainfall Simulator Demonstration showing the impact of rain on soil. Lunch will be served at noon with a short demonstration to follow. If you are going to join us for lunch please RSVP to the Wilkin SWCD by July 21st. To RSVP, please call 218-643-2933 Ext.3

#### **7/23 10-3 Organic Transition Workshop**

You are invited to a FREE training hosted by Dakota's Best Seed LLC to learn more about the process of transitioning to organic production. This is the first of a three-session series; to see details for the other two sessions, select them on our events page (dates: 7/30 and 8/4). <https://www.dakotasbestseedllc.com/events> 529 North Main Avenue, Garretson, SD

#### **7/25 9am, 11am, 1pm, 3pm Virtual Field Day**

Join the Coalition and Prairie Creek Seed for our Virtual Field Day. This event goes from 9-5 and features four separate sessions, each featuring a key component of sustainable farming. This event is jam-packed with knowledge and lessons learned by some of Minnesota's finest soil health advocates. The schedule includes: 9am Healthy Soils, 11am Cover Crop Pastures, 1pm Oats and Clover, 3pm Planting Green <https://www.facebook.com/events/604215850221926/>

#### **7/30-7/31 The Foundation for Regenerative Agriculture**

The Soil Health Institute's 5th Annual Meeting will feature virtual presentations by some of the world's most progressive farmers, scientists, educators, conservationists, and agricultural industry leaders engaged in soil health/regenerative agriculture. Another 80 video poster presentations will offer opportunities for interacting with the authors in real time.

<https://soilhealthinstitute.org/annual-meeting-2020/>

#### **8/8 2-6pm Nutritional Farming: Health from the Ground Up**

A field day in regenerative agriculture

Human physical and mental health face new challenges that are reshaping our society, and agriculture is the solution to these problems. The concept of food as medicine is gaining new life as we realize how important the soil is for increasing the nutrient diversity of our food. Learn how regenerative farming can help with the health of your family. Speakers will include: Dr. Daphne Miller, University of California, Kalie Rider, RD, North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition Seth Watkins, Regenerative Farmer and Rancher. Free locally catered supper to follow for 150 attendees. A guided Prairie Walk will follow supper. On the Northeast Corner of exit 157 on I-29 (the Brandt exit; wood house with a purple roof). 46958 188th Street, Estelline, SD, 57234

#### **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 will 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

## Still Looking into the Future

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

The Rollofson family is holding an educational Soil Health Expo to discuss and demonstrate soil health management tactics being implemented. 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. Lastly, watch some equipment get dirty in the side-by-side equipment 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 and planning. Register now for the Soil Health Expo <https://extension.umn.edu/event/soil-health-expo>

### 9/10-11 MN Soil Health School

A two day training designed to provide an introduction and 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. Who Should Attend? Farmers, agronomists, technical staff, those interested in learning more. Registration available at <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: Various 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, Minnesota Soil Health Coalition, Soil temperature and moisture results from the grant period of using cover crop strip-till management versus a conventional tillage management by Catherine Wegehaupt, Heron Lake Watershed District, and Soil test results from the grant using various managements. Where: Nancy and Jerry Ackermann's 39750 820th Street Lakefield, MN 56150

Find these events on our website  
<https://mnsoilhealth.org/events/>

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

## Soil Health Stories

Things are different than they were a year ago. Meetings and field events have been postponed and cancelled, our methods for sharing and learning have adapted. This is applicable to all things in life; things change and we continue to evolve. Without are ability to adapt, we would be constantly struggling and not using opportunities for growth and improvement.

What has been going on while social distancing, staying at home, and limiting contact with others? Soil health implementation! The farmers haven't stopped their commitment to implementing soil health practices, they are continuing to learn, adapt, and share.

- Matt and Bruce Tiffany from Redwood County shared their management strategies and outcomes
- Bill and Brian Pfarr talk about their cover crop test plots and how it effects their weed management

Find those and more videos here! <https://mnsoilhealth.org/videos/>

- Tom Fick talks with Dawn Madison about using soil health practices on the farm and creating a local soil health group
- Craig Mold talks about the changes in management in his 50 years of farming and how he's transitioning with soil health

Find those and more Podcasts here! <https://mnsoilhealth.org/resources-old/podcasts/>

**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/>

## Board Member and Farmer Mentor Eric Stelling

I farm with my father and brother in and around Osakis, MN. We currently operate around 1500 acres consisting of corn, beans, alfalfa, and some small grains. Approximately 160 acres of our operation is certified organic.

Three years ago we got out of dairy and now finish feeder cattle. We are in our second year of strip tilling and have been using cover crops for over 10 years, and have been no-tilling for much longer than that. Our soil varies from blow sand to heavy black soil, all of which require different management strategies.

In 2018 we were the Todd County farm family of the year and were the Farm Family of the year in 2019. We also custom chop for a few neighbors. I am also a gold country seed dealer.

We are actively working with EQIP and CSP programs. I use climate field view and Ag Solver to make decisions, as is how I got acquainted with Jennifer Hahn. Striving to improve soil health is and will always be priority number and proves to be challenging as well as rewarding.



Connect with Eric at <https://mnsoilhealth.org/mentor/>



Hear more from Eric July 24th at 11am at the Fridays on the Farm!

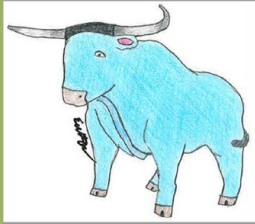
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/mnsoilhealth/events/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/mnsoilhealth/events/?ref=page_internal)

Want to show others how you talk dirty? Shirts are now available to purchase on our website to talk dirty and get away with it - while providing education about soil health!

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







## Babe's Country

### Is a clean forest a good forest?

Trails to access woodlands to enjoy them, manage, and create fire breaks is a normal and generally low disturbance activity. Clearing away trees, shrubs, and debris allow the trails to be accessible. What about the rest of the forest? Do we look around at it and think it needs cleaning up?

Dead trees, limbs, snag trees, piles of leaves, it makes the OCD clean freak want to sprint to get the rake, chainsaw, and trailer. These provide benefits not only to wildlife, but the soil that your forest is growing in. The cover shelters the soil from erosion, raindrop impact, evaporation and provides homes and food for organisms. Dead trees, branches, leaves, and limbs are food sources for many fungi which help to decompose these items (aka a free cleaning service). As they provide this cleaning service, it breaks down the vegetation into nutrients and organic matter that are then cycled back into the forest soil to continue to feed your forest.

What happens when we remove that material to make it neat and tidy? We're removing vast amounts of carbon-the building blocks of life. This reduces what we can be providing our soil and the opportunity to sequester carbon. We also will be reducing the population of soil organisms by reducing the habitat and food provided. Keeping your kitchen and bathroom tidy are important for your health and a better use of time!

## Using Cover Crops in Your Garden

Soil health isn't just for agricultural fields, our home gardens can see improvements while doing our part to benefit our natural resources! Understanding what covers work well with each crop is important so unwanted consequences don't happen. My first year of using oats in my garden proved to not be wise, my tomatoes were not happy growing next to it and I had severe blight issues all year. My brassicas had never looked better growing with the oats though! Luckily, people have experimented with covers in gardens and information is available. I have also noticed that my brassicas growing in thick cover crop stands are healthier, have more vigor, and don't show signs of water stress compared to the plants growing surrounded by dead residues. Legumes are great with tomatoes, beans are fine with grasses, onions can handle cover crop mixes, and squash will outcompete anything you through at it! Ann Marie Hendry wrote an article named *Overwintering Cover Crops for Crop Rotation* found here <https://www.growveg.com/guides/overwintering-cover-crops-for-crop-rotation/> that provides great information on veggie and cover crop rotations to provide benefits and reduce potential issues. There are other articles on the GrowVeg website that have excellent information on incorporating cover crops into your garden. I should have read this before my oats and tomato incident but luckily information is readily available now that we can learn from!

#### Contact

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

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