



For Release: March 8, 2017

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Practical Farmers launches “Cover Crop Caravan” spring field day series

AMES, Iowa — Practical Farmers of Iowa has planned a series of spring field days focused on cover crop issues in grazing and row crop systems. Farmers and community members are invited to see cover crops in action on a farm, and learn about cover crop basics as well as practices used to maximize the financial return from cover crops.

All field days in the series run from noon to 3 p.m., and are free and open to everyone. Each field day starts with a complimentary lunch. RSVPs are requested for the meal. Please contact Alisha Bower at (515) 232-5661 or alisha@practicalfarmers.org.

The series is called “Cover Crop Caravan” because many events include stops at multiple farms and locations. Specific details about each field day will be announced closer to the date. Host details and locations – along with a map of events – are also available at practicalfarmers.org. Events in the series include:

- **March 28** – “Grazing Cover Crops” – **Albion**
Hosted by: Wade Dooley, with guest speaker Allen Williams
- **March 29** – “Cover Crops for Corn and Soybeans” – **Reinbeck**
Hosted by Jack Boyer
- **March 30** – “Grazing Cover Crops” – **Maxwell**
Hosted by Bruce Carney, with guest speaker Allen Williams
- **April 4** – “Cover Crops for Corn and Soybeans” – **Hancock**
Hosted by Russ Brandes
- **April 6** – “Cover Crops for Corn and Soybeans” – **Leighton and Pella**
Hosted by Ward Van Dyke
- **April 11** – “Grazing Cover Crops” – **Lake City**
Hosted by Mark Schleisman
- **May 30** – “Grazing Cover Crops” – **Sioux Center**
Hosted by Matt Schuiteman

The field days on March 29, April 4 and April 6 will explore the fundamentals of working with cover crops. Guests will learn about planting methods, spring management tactics, and soil and water health benefits of cover crops. The host farmers will also expand on intermediate management topics, such as scouting cover crops, spring management for growing cover crop seed and management for rye going into corn.

The other events will showcase the value of integrating cover crops and livestock. Attendees will see cattle grazing cover crop fields, and learn about grazing management, nutrition from cover crop forage, contract grazing agreements and managing herbicide residues for grazing.

Practical Farmers of Iowa's 2017 spring cover crop field days are supported by Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; Iowa State University Extension; Land Stewardship Project; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota; The Pasture Project; and Unilever.

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Practical Farmers of Iowa strengthens farms and communities through farmer-led investigation and information-sharing. Our values include: welcoming everyone; creativity, collaboration and community; viable farms now and for future generations; and stewardship and ecology. Founded in 1985, farmers in our network raise corn, soybeans, livestock, hay, fruits and vegetables, and more. To learn more, visit <http://practicalfarmers.org>.