

News Release – Vernon County UW-Extension Office

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UW-Extension, Vernon County Office
608-637-5276

Meetings to Look at Local Cover Crop Practices

Farmers are finding ways to make cover crops faster and easier to incorporate in their row crops. A meeting is being held in February at two locations, Westby and Hillsboro, to look at methods farmers are using to incorporate cover crops and how cover crops are solving production problems on these operations. There is no charge for attending this meeting but pre-registration is required to reserve lunch and handouts.

The goal of most farmers is to increase farm value, protect the environment they operate in, and build potential for the next generation. For farmers in the driftless region this means that protecting the soil and increasing yield potential are priority management concerns. Cover crops contribute greatly to solving problems with soil erosion, water quality, and building soil quality. A well-known example is oats, a long standing cover crop planted as a companion to alfalfa to address two major problems with alfalfa establishment, soil erosion and weed control.

The problem solving benefits of cover crops are being expanded to row crops. Many farmers and landowners like to see green cover after corn and bean harvest to reduce soil erosion and these cover crops are now seen as an additional tool in the fight against herbicide resistant weeds. Farmers in the driftless region have also found ways of using cover crops to increase returns from their row crop operations.

A meeting on the establishment and benefits of cover crops is being held in February at two locations in Vernon County. The first location will be at Borgen's Café in Westby on February 7th, and the second location will be at Beezers Bar & Grill in Hillsboro on February 14. The program will begin with noon lunch at both locations.

Topics to be addressed include a cover crop conservation update, what nature's patterns tell us about cover crops, seeding methods and how well they work, problem solving cover crop practices from farms in the driftless region, what we can see in a shovel full of soil health, spring demonstrations coming up, and how cover crops have helped a farm from the heart of the driftless.

Borgen's Café is located at 109 S. Main St. in Westby and Beezer's Bar & Grill is located at Hwy. 33 & 82 in Hillsboro, WI. The meetings begin with sign-in at 11:30 and noon lunch at both locations. This program and lunch is sponsored by the Land and Water Conservation Department, NRCS, UW-Extension, The Pasture Project of the Wallace Center at Winrock International, and the National Wildlife Federation. **Register to attend this meeting by calling the Vernon County Land & Water Conservation Department at 608-637-5480 and indicate which location you will attend.**