Attachment 1. *Today's Farm article*
Farmers look to reduce erosion, improve soil health over winter

A seed mix including two types of radish, purple top turnip, clover, cereal rye and oats is vacuumed from a gravity wagon and blown into the airplane for aerial seeding.

Moving northward, in recent years, a handful of farmers in Jackson County and about as many in Nobles County have been planting cover crops through trial and error. While widely accepted in the eastern Corn Belt — states like Illinois and Indiana — the practice is just starting to gain interest in Minnesota. "Farmer in last generation, part of it is that they have lower organic matter soils," said Jerry Perkins, of rural Worthington. He, along with his neighbors, are the benefactors of funding secured by the Morton Lake Watershed District in late August to further study the use of cover crops.

A $2,200 national Wildlife Federation grant was awarded to the HLWD to produce cover crops. The grant helped fund Perkins' attendance at a five-day media training in Indianapolis, Ind., and will also be used to host a Cover Crops Field Day at the Adrian town site on 1 p.m. Nov. 18. During the event, speakers will talk about the effectiveness of cover crops, water quality benefits and the experiences of local landowners.

"We need to know a lot about cover crops in southern Minnesota," said HLWD Administrator Rick Origlio. "Having these willing landowners helping us figure out how to make these cover crops viable is really important.

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With water as important as it is, we need to help one soil hold every drop of water it can," she said. "We need to improve infiltration rates and improve organic matter." With numerous cover crop options available, farmers are encouraged to choose seed or seed mixes that will benefit their land, whether the goal is to break up soil compaction, prevent wind erosion or absorb excess nutrients in the soil.

"These crops catch on that hold or reduce occupation by growing through that tillage layer or plow pan," McLain said. "One of the tillage layer or erosion neuro slowly has a top so that grows through those compaction means to break up soil." These cover crops that will absorb that water, she pointed out, also take up the nutrients that we don't want them on the soil," she explained. "So they're those microorganisms, the bacteria and the fungi below the surface." The bacteria help to plant the right size tillage radish in its cover crop mix. "It has a tap root that goes down to at least 15 inches, with small, lateral holes," she described, adding that the cover crop has proven to kill weeds before the soybean cyst nematodes.

The pilot watches as cover crop seed is blown into his airplane using a seed vac system.

With water as important as it is, we need to help one soil hold every inch of water it can. Stephanie McLain (NDPC) Contributed

"These crops catch on that hold or reduce occupation by growing through that tillage layer or plow pan," Ackermann said. "They're those microorganisms, the bacteria and the fungi below the surface." The bacteria help to plant the right size tillage radish in its cover crop mix. "It has a tap root that goes down to at least 15 inches, with small, lateral holes," she described, adding that the cover crop has proven to kill weeds before the soybean cyst nematodes.

The pilot watches as cover crop seed is blown into his airplane using a seed vac system.

An airplane drops seed over a corn field Sept. 5 near Sioux Valley. The cover crop seed, once it grows, will soak up nutrients left in the soil and break up soil compaction.

The Herberts of rural Wellington, to try seeding annual ryegrass four years ago. "Our hope was that if we could drop seed in early September, we'd spread annual ryegrass on with fertilizer and lightly incorporate it," Herberts explained. "The hope was that we could get something to cover the soil and prevent any erosion from happening that fall or early spring.

The Herberts of rural Wellington, to try seeding annual ryegrass four years ago. "Our hope was that if we could drop seed in early September, we'd spread annual ryegrass on with fertilizer and lightly incorporate it," Herberts explained. "The hope was that we could get something to cover the soil and prevent any erosion from happening that fall or early spring."
COVER CROPS
from Page D11

In his first two years seeding cover crops, Hansen braced his equipment and his attempts failed due to dry weather in September.

"It's been a long time since I've seen a lot of weed growth in the field and now we have a killing frost," he said.

This year, Hansen said, his field is looking better than usual and his cover crop program is overall a success.

Looking ahead, Hansen said he plans to continue his cover crop program and see how it performs in the field.

Jeff Rogers seeds winter rye, hairy vetch, and tillage radish seed Sept. 13 on property owned by the Okabena-Ochelsa Watershed District north of Worthington.

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Jeff Rogers pours cover crop seed into a seeder Sept. 13 on a small field on the edge of Worthington.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Riverbend area NRCS office can sign interested farmers up for the Soil Health Initiative, which requires cover crops be grown longer-term — a minimum of five years, with planting done on the same land each of those years.

McLain said those projects typically are $500 to $1,000 per year.

"If you can maintain the site every year," she said, adding that determining the amount collected can be quite variable, "it’s a good way to maintain soil quality and structure.

"Some of the things that have seen is that infiltration rates doubled or tripled in the field," she said. "The amount of water the soil can take in... is considerably.

Soil structure improves, structure holds together. McLain said, adding that earthworm holes can be visible in the soil in where the structure is broken down, the dirt crumbles into powder in a person’s hand.

In addition to improving soil structure, McLain said cover crops help with soil erosion and also steepness on the existing plants.

"Through the Soil Health Initiative, McLain said the five-year project is a benefit in that it will provide farmers with better data on how cover crops can improve the soil.

"It takes a while for soil to regain its structure, to regain infiltration — to come back to those levels," she said. "It takes a while for the crops to return to the soil.

"It’s still early for this year, but it’s never too early to get started," added Karen Buehler, Jackson County NRCS soil conservationist.

She said cost-share can vary from year to year.

This year, programs paid anywhere from $50 to $200 acres for farmers willing to plant cover crops.

Daily Globe Reporter Joel Bowler
may be reached at 270-7840.
Local cover crop champions to share expertise at field day

by MIKE JORDAN
Staff Writer

They've done it themselves for four years, and now Jerry and Nancy Ackermann of a farm in Lakefield are taking a next step in getting the word out about cover crops. They have been featured in a National Wildlife Federation Cover Crop Champions grant written by Hetares Lake Watershed District Administrator Jan Voit and submitted to the federal government.

"The purpose of this grant is to help landowners and communities in the Lake Watershed District promote their involvement with cover crops as a means to distribute conservation technology to other agricultural producers and the community," Voit said.

"The ultimate goal is to engage farmers that will implement cover crops for water quality improvement as well as their own farm's sustainability."

The Ackermanns will be hosting a field day next Wednesday, Nov. 18, at their farm located on 39750 820th St. since 1981. They currently raise corn, soybeans, and alfalfa as a cash crop and once again have engaged in the cultivation of cover crops on a portion of their acreage. "Cover crops actually aren't new to the area; they were previously used when people grew oats or wheat here," Jerry Ackermann said. "Oats was used as a companion crop to build up the soil. We have experimented with cover crops the last four years."

The Ackermanns were motivated to experiment after their success rotating corn and soybeans with alfalfa. "We noticed the benefits of growing corn and soybeans after a field of alfalfa is rotated to a new location," he said. "Hopefully we can mimic this benefit with cover crops."

To date, the Ackermanns have raised rye, oats, annual rye, oats, tillage radish, turnips, and forage crops at their farm, and so far they have seen some benefits in raising these crops. "Tillage radishes have the ability to send a deep tap root to break up any hard pan from soil compaction, along with the ability to soak up any unused nitrogen in the soil and make it available to the next crop," he said. "Rye also has a massive root system to soak up nutrients. It also suppresses weed seed germination. All cover crops benefit soil health in one way or another."

"Having previously worked with the HJWT, the Ackermanns have a heart not only for improving their own soil and crop production but also water quality as part of the watershed in which they live."

We believe there are still many things to be discovered on how beneficial farming practices can also help improve water quality," he said. "We have hosted a field day the last two years and will again this fall. We have had an increased turnout each year. More people are becoming interested in cover crops and soil health."

As cover crop champions, the Ackermanns and Perkins have both been working with other agricultural professionals, including those at the HJWT, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Extended Ag Services, and LeCrois Seed Co. "We will keep trying to experiment to see what type of cover crop does best here in this area, as well as experiment with different seeding dates," Ackermann said.

The Perkins have lived 39 years on their farm north of Worthington. Presently they raise corn and soybeans and have some land in the Conservation Reserve Program. But they also have cover crops. "We had a three- to five-way cocktail mix of cover crops including rye, oats, turnips, radish, and cover crop seeds, including cereal rye, oats, and radish, plus crimson clover."

"Erosion control, increased water infiltration rates, increased organic matter, and enhanced soil microbial activity and sequestered nutrients are some of the benefits we have experienced from using cover crops," he said. "We got involved with the HJWT's National Wildlife Federation Cover Crop Champions grant project because we are interested in promoting the practice.

And we were not able to attend the meeting in Indianapolis. We are just getting started. We have discussed cover crops with all of the personnel of the Okoboji-Ochocca Watershed; they have seeded 20 acres of cover crops. We are a participant in a newly formed cover crop research project with the University of Minnesota too."

The Perkins actually started with grant work three years ago and have been working with Jerry Ackermann, Dan Lindahl, administrator for the Okoboji-Ochocca Watershed District, Andy and Jim Nemeth, crop consultants, Lee Stahl, U of M Extension crops educator, and Tim Hassenger, farmer and crop consultant, not to mention an extensive network of cover crop professionals in other states who are just an email away.

"We see the impact of cover crop use resulting in cleaner streams, rivers and lakes, less tillage and erosion; as well as nutrient loss," Perkins said. "And in the fall and early spring, we get to see a greener landscape. Now up for us is assisting with the field day Nov. 18 in the Lakefield area, but we continue to work with the promotion of cover crops as one of the tools to protect soil, air and water, which is a continuation of a career-long effort to carry out and fine-tune conservation practices on the landscape. Cover crops are not a practice that can be implemented in isolation. The practice must be paired with no-till, strip-till or ridge-till. One cannot use cover crops successfully in a corn-soybean rotation and do fall tillage."
Local cover crop champions to share expertise at a Wednesday, Nov. 13, field day on the farm

by MIKE JORDAN
Staff Writer

They’ve done it themselves for four years, and now Jerry and Nancy Ackerman of rural Lakefield, Minn., are taking the next step in getting their story out about cover crops, thanks to a National Wildlife Federation Cover Cropping Champions grant written by Illinois Lake Watershed District Administrator John Voit and awarded to them and Washington farmers Jerry and Terry Perkins.

The purpose of this grant is to help farm- ers operate in the Illinois Lake Watershed District promote their involvement with cover crops as an avenue to distribute conservation technology to other agriculture producers and the community,” Voit said. “The ultimate goal is to have a program that will promote cover crops for water quality improvement as well as their own farm’s sustainability.”

The Ackermans will host a field day today and Wednesday, Nov. 13, at their farm northwest of Lakefield, in the far northwest corner of the district. It’s all new to them.

They first implemented cover crops in 2010, with a large-scale project, and again in 2011, planting legumes in strips on corn stalks that year.

They also partnered with the ILWDC through the Minnesota Natural Environment Grant to implement a 20-acre cover crop demonstration plot, on which they planted radishes, turnips and sugarcane to help reduce soil erosion.

Having previously worked with the ILWDC on other projects, the Ackermans have also been involved in the cover crop projects, and are looking to improve the margins of practice.

This year, they will host a field day the last two years and will again this fall. They have had an increased turnout each year. More area farmers have expressed interest in cover crops.

As cover crop champions, the Ackermans and Perkins have both been working共同努力 with all the agriculture producers in their neighborhoods to make sure they are doing so again this fall.

The Ackermans have been farming in the same location — 3750 24th St. — since 1983. They currently raise corn, soybeans and alfalfa as a cash crop and are experimenting with the benefits of their acreage.

“Certain crops actually don’t like the area because they are prone to frost,” Jerry Ackerman said. “Covers were used as a companion crop to build up the soil. We have experimented with cover crops for a few years.”

They also have experimented with cover crops after a field of wheat, as well as to build up the soil.

“With the benefits of growing corn and soybeans after a field of wheat, it is related to a companion crop,” Jerry Ackerman said.

Jerry Ackerman will host a field day Nov. 13 at his farm southwest of Lakefield.

If you go...

What: Cover crop field day

When: Thursday, Nov. 14, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Where: West of the Ackerman farm, 3750 24th St., Lakefield

Local cover crop champions to share expertise at a Wednesday, Nov. 13, field day on the farm

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Jerry Ackerman will host a field day Nov. 13 at his farm southwest of Lakefield.
Attachment 4. Press Release

Cover Crop Field Day, November 13, 2013

LAKEFIELD, MINNESOTA (September 11, 2013) Join event partners on November 13, 2013 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm for a cover crop discussion at the Ackermann farm near Lakefield, Minnesota. Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD), Jerry and Nancy Ackermann, and Jerry and Terry Perkins were awarded a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Cover Crop Champions grant to promote cover crop adoption.

A cover crop mixture of winter cereal rye, tillage radish, and purple top turnip was planted into standing corn and planted in early September 2013 just west of the Ackermann farmstead. This aerial application allowed for a longer cover crop growing season in the corn-soybean system. The Ackermans chose the cover crop species for their ability to scavenge nitrogen, add organic matter to the soil, increase water infiltration, decrease soil erosion, and reduce weed competition.

Attendees will be able to hear about the NWF project being conducted by the Ackermans, Perkins, and HLWD, learn about cover crop benefits, and view the cover crops in the field. This is an outdoor event, please dress accordingly.

Event Partners:
- National Wildlife Federation
- Jerry and Nancy Ackermann
- Extended Ag Service, Inc.
- Heron Lake Watershed District
- Jerry and Terry Perkins
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

DIRECTIONS:
Jerry and Nancy Ackermann – 39750 820th Street - Lakefield, MN
From Lakefield: Travel west on Mill Rd. W. / 820th Street / County Road 14 for about 5.5 miles. The Ackermann farmstead is on the north side of the road.

Contact for this event:
Jan Voit – Heron Lake Watershed District, 507-793-2462 or jan.voit@mysmhs.com
Jerry and Nancy Ackermann, 507-662-5577
Jerry and Terry Perkins – 507-376-4792
Learn about the cover crop project being conducted through a National Wildlife Federation grant in partnership with Jerry & Nancy Ackermann, Jerry & Terry Perkins, and the Heron Lake Watershed District.

Call 507-793-2462 or email jan.voit@mysmbs.com for more information.

**Cover Crop Field Day**

**November 13, 2013**

1:00 p.m.

39750 820th Street, Lakefield, MN

From Lakefield: Travel west on Mill Road/820th Street/County Road 14 for about 5.5 miles. The Ackermann farmstead is on the north side of the road.

**AGENDA**

12:45 p.m. – Registration

1:00 p.m. – Welcome and Introductions

1:10 p.m. – Jerry Ackermann & Jerry Perkins

2:00 p.m. – Andy Nesseth, Extended Ag

2:15 p.m. – Jill Sackett, University of Minnesota

2:30 p.m. – Karen Boysen, Jackson NRCS

2:45 p.m. – Stephanie McLain, Nobles NRCS

3:15 p.m. – View cover crops
Sex offender releases suspended
Gov. Dayton halts — for now — changes to controversial program

Pregnancy center to host fundraiser

‘Parents Just Don’t Understand’ play is Friday, Saturday night

Area farmers see benefits of cover crops

Nurse discipline due for a change
COVER CROPS

From Page A1

Andi Elliott, of Elliott’s Farm in LaSalle, has found that planting cover crops can be a great way to improve soil health and overall sustainability on a farm. She has been experimenting with various crops, including clover, mustard, and radish, which can help prevent erosion, add nutrients to the soil, and provide habitat for beneficial insects.

“Cover crops are a great way to improve soil health and overall sustainability on a farm. They help reduce erosion, add nutrients to the soil, and provide habitat for beneficial insects,” Elliott said.

Purple-tipped horseradish and violet radish are shown growing on cover crops on one of Asber’s farms.

WHIS FALL PLAY

From Page A1

“Whis the Fall play?,” asked Nancy. “We’re going to see the final performance!”

“I have seen it and it was great! I think you guys really need to see it,” said John.

“Our kids really loved it and they’re excited to see it again!”, added Mary.}

Despite some parents finding the play too long, many agreed that it was a great way to connect with their family and learn about the struggles of the characters. The performances were held at the local community center and were free to the public.

YOU CALL IT

“Helping my sister handle paperwork.”

“You arranged for her to go to the doctor?”

“No, I helped her fill out some forms and made a few phone calls.”

“Your sister is lucky to have you!”

“Thanks, I try my best to be there for her.”

“I’ve been through it too, so I know it can be tough.”

“Tell her to take it easy and get some rest.”

“Yeah, I know she’s been feeling really tired lately.”

“I hope she feels better soon.”

“Take care of yourself too.”

“I will, thank you.”

YOU CALL IT

“Helping my sister handle paperwork.”

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“Helping my sister handle paperwork.”
Cover Crop Champions Field Day  
November 13, 2013

As part of their Roadmap for Increased Cover Crop Adoption, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) sought farmers who use cover crops and agricultural professionals who are full-time employees of a farm-related organization to provide region-specific information and farming knowledge to farmers and crop advisors.

The HLWD is always seeking landowners and operators to install water quality improvement practices on their property. Providing first-hand information about practice effectiveness in the watershed is one of the best avenues to secure participation.

With those goals in mind, HLWD staff drafted and submitted an application to the NWF. In this effort, the HLWD partnered with Jerry and Nancy Ackermann and Jerry and Terry Perkins to promote their involvement with cover crops as a means to distribute conservation technology to other agriculture producers and the community.

The HLWD and partners were awarded $7,500 through this grant. The culmination of the work was a Cover Crop Field Day held on November 13, 2013 at the Jerry and Nancy Ackermann residence.

Jan Voigt welcomed the attendees and provided background on the grant. Jerry Ackermann and Jerry Perkins spoke about their personal experiences with cover crops and their goals of preserving nutrients, reducing compaction, increasing yield, weed suppression, and soil health. Andy Nessel, Extended Ag Services, Inc. provided information about soil grid sampling and soil test results. Jill Sackett, University of Minnesota, spoke about management of cover crops. Stephanie McLain, Nobles Natural Resources Conservation District gave a soil health demonstration. Following the presentations, attendees had the opportunity to view cover crops in the field. There were 45 people in attendance.
Cover Crop Champions Field Day

A scoop of the cover crops are shown above.

As part of their efforts to increase awareness of Cover Crop advocates, the National Wildland Fire Agency (NWFA) sought farmers who use cover crops and agronomic practitioners who use the full-time employee of a shared risk-adjusted program to provide limit insurance knowledge to farmers and calendars practitioners.

The NWFA is always looking for new ways to assess and develop curriculum in the field. Providing new expert reviews in paper presentations and other community and knowledge-sharing opportunities is always an improvement on the field. Providing expert reviews in paper presentations and other community and knowledge-sharing opportunities is always an improvement on the field.

Attendees were able to see several demonstrations.

The VA will never ask you for a credit card number or any financial information.

In all cases, before giving personal sensitive information to a solicitor, ask for the solicitor name and identify which office they are working for.

The solicitor name should be visible (at least 50 ft. away) and contact number won’t be disclosed.

The VA does not sell, rent or lease information identifying individuals.

Nurse Corps Service Officer B. Broadway points out a holiday survival talk that has been tested in veterans.

Sharing, giving and caring, the spirit of holidays in special section

In this week of Thanksgiving, our thoughts turn to the coming holiday season, Full of joy and fun, it is the time to give thanks and share the blessings of the season with family and friends. Full of joy and fun, it is the time to give thanks and share the blessings of the season with family and friends.

This holiday season is dedicated to the spirit of giving and caring. Electronic subscribers can access this in the Mercury News Advance edition, beginning this weekend.

Jackson County four legged officer to receive a bullet and stab protective vest

The Jackson County Sheriff’s Office announced, for the first time, a four legged officer to receive a bullet and stab protective vest. The four legged officer will be named after the Sheriff’s Office and the Presidential Service Protection. The four legged officer will be named after the Sheriff’s Office and the Presidential Service Protection.

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North Main Community Church will be hosting a Thanksgiving meal for the first time in 2013. The meal will be held on Thanksgiving Day, November 28th, at 12 PM. The meal will be held on Thanksgiving Day, November 28th, at 12 PM.

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Scam being perpetrated against veterans

Nurse Corps Service Officer B. Broadway points out a holiday survival talk that has been tested in veterans.

Sharing, giving and caring, the spirit of holidays in special section

In this week of Thanksgiving, our thoughts turn to the coming holiday season, Full of joy and fun, it is the time to give thanks and share the blessings of the season with family and friends. Full of joy and fun, it is the time to give thanks and share the blessings of the season with family and friends.

This holiday season is dedicated to the spirit of giving and caring. Electronic subscribers can access this in the Mercury News Advance edition, beginning this weekend.

Jackson County four legged officer to receive a bullet and stab protective vest

The Jackson County Sheriff’s Office announced, for the first time, a four legged officer to receive a bullet and stab protective vest. The four legged officer will be named after the Sheriff’s Office and the Presidential Service Protection. The four legged officer will be named after the Sheriff’s Office and the Presidential Service Protection.

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Minn. farmers see benefits of cover crops

Both Perkins and Ackerman participated in a Heron Lake Watershed District pilot project in which the district received a National Wildlife Federation grant to assist farmers growing cover crops. In early September, they joined with a few other farmers in Jackson and Nobles counties, to seed 20 acres of soybeans and corn with cover crops such as the purple-podded vetch, legumes, and red clover, among others.

"The seeds are really different from a variety of sources," said Ackerman, and the impact is seen especially for weed and cover crops planted for at least one year.

"It's a great way to improve soil health," said Ackerman. "It's a great way to improve soil health, and we're excited to see what the future holds for this practice."

Jerry Perkins, on the other hand, said that his planted, cover crops because they feed the microorganisms in the soil.

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