



Agriculture - Crops & Soils Programming: October 2024 to January 2025



Extension Regional Crops Educator Will Fulwider collaborates with Dodge County row and forage crop farmers as well as agribusiness professionals to create educational programming and research tailored to meet the need for farm economic and environmental sustainability.

Needs Assessment

- Informal, semi-structured interviews with farmers and agribusiness professionals (crop consultants, agronomists, agency staff, ag lenders) about key challenges in their production systems
- Advise and solicit feedback from DATCP Producer-led Watershed Groups as well as other self-organizing farmer groups like the Dodge County Forage Council
- Evaluations from both Extension-hosted and farmer-hosted educational programming events in the county

Completed Projects

Cover crop nutrient survey | 2022-2023

- Conducted in response to various Dodge County farmer questions about what nutrients were recycled by cover crops
- Collected samples from 6 farms and 11 sites in Dodge County in spring and fall and analyzed for nutrient content and decomposition rate proxy C:N ratio to estimate in-season nutrient availability
- Secured \$4,000 in funding from The Nature Conservancy to fund the project

Nitrogen rate study for winter cereal forages | 2022-2024

- Facilitated research on two sites, one in Dodge County, as part of state-wide, Extension-study in collaboration with Dodge County Forage Council investigating nitrogen rates for winter cereal forage production in and quality
- Presented to the Dodge County Forage Council Annual Meetings 2023 and 2024

Regional manure composting workshop | 2023

- Over 50 attendees to a farmer-asked for comprehensive workshop on manure composting approaches and management and nutrient availability

Current Projects

Estimating nitrogen credits from multi-species cover crops planted after wheat | 2023-2025

- 3 farmers in Dodge County and 3 in Dane County planted multi-species cover crops and no cover controls overlain with a nitrogen rate trial to determine nitrogen crediting from multi-species cover crops
- Findings can help to guide Dodge County farmers on when they can pull back on nitrogen rates, saving farmers money and reducing nitrate leaching to groundwater in the county
- Helped to secure \$74,000 NOPP and \$49,000 SARE in grant dollars for the project

Winter camelina: a new cover crop for Wisconsin? | 2023-2026

- 4 farmers across southern Wisconsin planted winter camelina and rye cover crops after soybeans to evaluate effects on nitrate leaching and yield drag in corn
- Secured \$39,000 in grant dollars for the project
- Two Dodge County farmer attendees in post-field day conversations noted that the field day was “exactly what they were looking for” and provided the information to allow the farmer to make a decision to compost on their farm

Grazing cover crops interseeded in 60” row corn field day | 2022 & 2023

- 43 attendees across two years attended a pop up field day in Dodge County showcasing the economics of increasing grazing opportunities by interseeding cover crops
- Attendees rated the field day a 4.7/5 and all noted their knowledge increased at least somewhat, while 59% said theirs increased a great deal

Ongoing Efforts

Field Notes podcast | 10 episodes a year on topics ranging from economics of conservation to frost seeding red clover, with 4 episodes featuring Dodge County guests

- Listenership ranges from 200-700 listens per episode with the vast majority of listens coming from Wisconsin, but includes listeners from 45 countries

Ag Update E-Newsletter | Monthly newsletter sent to more 450+ recipients in Dodge County and 870+ across the region