



Agriculture: Crops & Soils Programming Updates from Community Needs Assessment



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

Community Needs Forum: Ag Priorities

- Succession Planning and Support for New Generations
- Immigrant Worker support and Integration
- Public Perception and Information Sharing

Ongoing Efforts

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 covers after soybeans to evaluate effects on nitrate leaching and yield drag in corn

Community Needs Forum Update

Demonstration of new cover crops to drive adoption and enhance community perception of agriculture

- Worked with Universal Co-op to drone seed camelina on four different farmers' fields to demonstrate cover crop option with fewer disadvantages to cash crop than rye
- Negative public perception of agriculture in Wisconsin is tied to soil and nutrient runoff
- Increased adoption of cover crops that reduce soil and nutrient runoff will improve public perception of agriculture

Succession planning and support for new farmers

- Farm Management program of Extension is hosting two workshop series on succession planning and farm transition called "Cultivating Your Farm's Future"
- The first series is being offered November/December 2025 with the series running again in February 2025 for Wisconsin farm families
- Multiple family members are encouraged to attend
- The program provides one Cultivating Your Farm's Future workbook, one copy of Cultivating Continuity, a Learner's Guide for each person registered, course videos, and give live zoom classes

- Secured \$39,000 in grant dollars for the project

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