



PRESS RELEASE: *For immediate release*

Farm fields needed to explore economic benefits of cover crops

WEST LAFAYETTE, IN July 19, 2016: Hundreds of acres of Indiana farmland are being studied by researchers at Purdue University at part of a project to identify the economic benefits and costs of cover cropping system.

But more farm fields are needed.

“Farmer involvement is a key component of this study,” explains Purdue University Economist Wally Tyner, who is leading the three-year project. “To achieve the most comprehensive dataset, we need to expand the acreage enrolled in the study. And we need both farmers who use cover crops and those who do not.”

Through a Conservation Innovation Grant from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Foundation, NFP, in collaboration with Purdue University, is developing a comprehensive dataset on the economics of cover cropping systems. The study uses entire field data, rather than data from strip trials. To better assess long-term effects of cover crops, eight years of data will be taken, rather than a single year.

“Farmers tell us that one of the biggest reasons why they don’t adopt conservation practices is the lack of credible information about the economics of these practices,” Tyner adds. “We are seeking farmers to help us gather the data needed so we can compare economics of systems with and without cover crops.”

To be part of this important study, farmers should contact Tyner, wtyner@purdue.edu, or 765-494-0199. To participate, a farming operation must be in one of 37 Central or Northeast Indiana counties: Adams, Allen (western), Benton, Blackford, Boone, Carroll, Clinton, Decatur, DeKalb, Delaware, Fayette, Grant, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Henry, Howard, Huntington, Jay, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Miami, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Putnam, Randolph, Rush, Shelby, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Union, Wabash, Wayne, Wells, and Whitley.

Up to five fields will be targeted on each farm. Only farms with corn-corn or corn-soybean rotations on the targeted fields will be accepted. Both cover crop and non-cover crop farms and fields are needed.

Farmers should provide five years of historic data on the targeted fields. This will be combined with the data gathered over the three years of the project. All supplied and collected data will remain confidential, unless the farmer explicitly releases the data. Farmers participating in the study will be compensated. Soil health test results will be provided to participating farmers.

“Though we’re pulling data from a specific area, the results of the study will be relevant to much of the Corn Belt,” Tyner explained. “As part of the work, we will be developing best practices for data collection that can be used in the future in other regions.”

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