

Natural Resources Conservation Service Report To Papio-Missouri River NRD Board December 14, 2017 Neil Jensen, District Conservationist

#Fridaysonthefarm Features

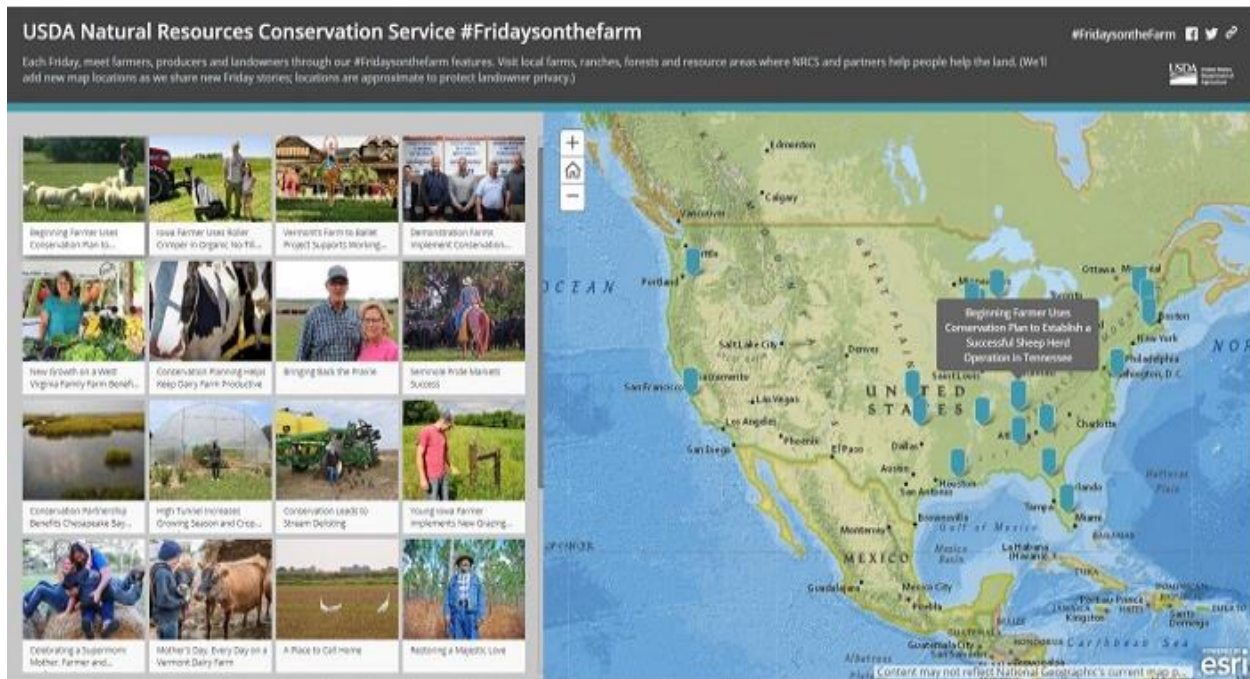
JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Follow the #Fridaysonthefarm and other voluntary conservation stories on @USDA_NRCS Twitter and @USDA Facebook.

[View all #Fridaysonthefarm feature stories.](#)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) brings people together across the nation for: healthier food, natural resources and people; a stronger agricultural industry; and economic growth, jobs and innovation.

Each Friday, meet those farmers, producers and landowners through our #Fridaysonthefarm stories. Visit local farms, ranches, forests and resource areas where NRCS and partners help people help the land.



- Soil Health Systems
- Organic Farming
- Bats, Crayfish, Pollinators
- High Tunnels
- Dairy Farming
- Demonstration Farms
- Community Gardens
- Farming with Nature
- Beginning Veteran Farmer
- Irrigation

Cover Crops and Ecosystem Services: Insights from Studies in Temperate Soils (Source: UNL Crop Watch/Agronomy Journal, Volume 107, Issue 6, 2015)



Cover crops can provide multiple soil, agricultural production, and environmental benefits. However, a better understanding of such potential ecosystem services is needed.

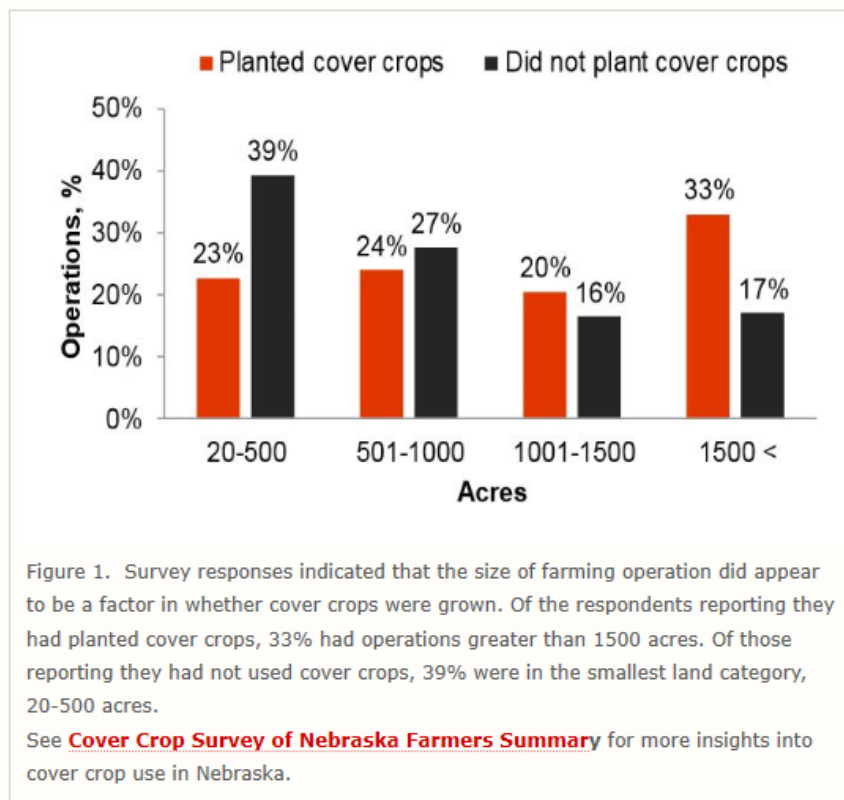
The review summarized the current state of knowledge of cover crops effects on soil C stocks, soil erosion, physical properties, soil water, nutrients, microbial properties, weed control, crop yields, expanded uses, and economics and highlighted research needs. The review indicated that cover crops are multifunctional.

Cover crops:

- Increase soil organic carbon stock with the magnitude depending on biomass amount, years in cover crops, and initial soil carbon level.
- Runoff loss can decrease by up to 80%.
- Sediment loss from 40% to 96% with cover crops.
- Cover crops alleviate soil compaction, improve soil structural and hydraulic properties, moderate soil temperature, improve microbial properties, recycle nutrients, and suppress weeds.
- Cover crops increase or have no effect on crop yields but reduce yields in water-limited regions by reducing available water for the subsequent crops.

Nebraska Cover Crops: What, Where, and How

(Source: UNL Crop Watch)



Farmers attending the 2015 Pesticide Safety Education Program Courses, Crop Production Clinics, and the Nebraska No-till Conferences were invited to take a survey. 258 Nebraska farmers responded to the survey.

The results of the survey showed:

- Of the participating farmers, 34% planted cover crops during the previous cropping season.
- The top ranked barrier to cover crop use was time and labor required to manage cover crops. This was followed closely by cover crop seed cost.
- Despite being a small proportion of the acres managed, corn silage and hybrid seed corn acres made up slightly over one-third of the cover crop acres.
- Brassicas and winter cereal grains were the most commonly planted cover crops.
- Of the farmers who planted cover crops, 49% grazed some portion of their cover crop acres.



USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.