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Cover Crop Online Resources

By: Woody Woodruff

These days if you want to learn about something, but are just not into going long distances to sit in on a workshop or seminar, you are in luck. The world wide web brings knowledge to your fingertips. And now, with universities posting research presentations and seminars online, learning is even easier.

If you are thinking about cover crops, then you are in luck. I have been following these posts and have put together some websites that you might find educational.

1. Practical Farmers of Iowa:
practicalfarmers.org/programs/Field-Crops.php
This site has lots of Research & Demonstrations topics to choose from. They also have a Podcast option as well.

2. The University of Missouri Extension:
extension.missouri.edu/sare/covercropssymposium.aspx
The U of M recently hosted a symposium on cover crops and posted the presentations online. Here you can find great in depth cover crop topics and
3. The Illinois Council on Best Management Practices:
http://illinoiscbmp.org/Cover%20Crop%20Training%20Initiative/
Here you can select from a wide variety of cover crop training presentations. Just click on any of the speakers under the Training Presentations category.

4. Plant Cover Crops:
plantcovercrops.com/category/education/online-training-seminars
If you have ever had the opportunity to listen to Dave Robinson give one of his dynamic lectures on why to use cover crops, you will be excited that he has a clearinghouse of information on this website. Just choose one of the many topics that would like to learn more about.

5. Conservation Technology Information Center,
"Helping People, Land and Water: The Cover Crop Story"
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kJFpyU4o4&feature=youtu.be
If you are a person that likes to watch videos on youtube, this link is for you. And be sure to check out their 11 other conservation videos on youtube as well.

6. Midwest Cover Crop Council Website:
www.mccc.msu.edu/
From here, can click on as many of the topics on the site as possible to become familiar with the choices of information. If you are enrolled in a Cover Crop program in either NRCS EQUIP or CSP the standards and specs guidelines come from the Midwest Cover Crop Council Decision Tool- Field Crops: mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/Vertindex.php.
There is also a MCCC Decision Tool for Vegetable Crops: mcccdev.anr.msu/testVegIndex.php

The Farmer:
Life on Woody’s Stewardship Farm

By: Woody Woodruff

Ever since time began for me I wanted to be a farmer. Some might have not thought this career path as the safest or easiest road to success in my situation. You see, my home growing up was not in a country setting, but a small townhouse with an office in it where my dad sold insurance for State Farm and my mom worked as a secretary for Dad. Both my parents had memories of work on their grandparents’ farms, but both those family farms ceased to exist. In the 1950’s my father bought, to my mom’s dismay, a small farm. Some of the ground was not farm-able, with timber and bluffs. It had some bottom ground that seemed to flood more than not. However, he did end up with 100 acres of farm-able cropland, so my dad became a part-time farmer. I was the youngest of four boys growing up so we all took our turns feeding livestock, baling hay, cultivating corn, and walking beans. We all gained different life skills from the involvement on that farm. That was probably a good thing in the eyes of my parents, because for them that farm was definitely not a money maker over the years.

As my brothers graduated and moved on to their different paths in life, it was I who
ended up living on the farm. You see, at an early age I felt a deep connection to that land and knew that agriculture and farming was a skill that I was going to have to master if my family was going to sustain a living on that piece of ground. So I started by taking Ag classes in high school and joined the FFA chapter. Unlike most of my farm friends in school whose families had a lot more land to make a living off, I needed to amp my skills to a higher level if I was going to make this career choice the right one.

So off to college I went for a degree in Agriculture. They taught me how to farm on a large farm. That wasn’t me. So I took a risk and joined the Peace Corps. I learned Tropical Agriculture in Jamaica and then a few years later Arid Agriculture in Mauritania. I worked with Sub-Saharan farmers that had been farming the same way sense before Christ. These experiences took a commitment that at most times was not in my comfort zone. I had to become part of everyday life in a community before understanding why it had sustained that community for such a long time. If I had to sum up what was learned, it’s that the land was more than just something that feeds a community. Farmers came and went but community success was linked to the land’s health over time. Even though a farmer’s time with the land is short in the span of a community, how he or she takes care of it affects the long term life of that community. In the priority of things, the community has a role in protecting their resources. Good land gives both the community and the farmer health and stability. Learning this has definitely changed my everyday priorities on my farm and in my community. Because of this, I’m living a more service-oriented lifestyle on my farm. And I love it.

A farm can be a hearth to a community. My family farm, Mud Prairie, is named after a historic Prairie that once existed and is now restored. If you attended Waverly High School you might have had your senior picture taken there or been on a field trip in the past. If you are a Boy Scout or Girl Scout in the area, you have hiked the trails and discovered something new. If you are in my local 4-H group, you just celebrated the fact that you are the oldest 4-H club in Illinois out at the farm. My hope is that you can see as I do, that being a farmer is so much more that harvesting crops or raising livestock.
Cover Crop Webinar Series

Improving soil health not only cleans up water quality and reduces soil loss but also provides a better environment for cash crops to succeed. Learn about basic soil health principles and how cover crops are key to making those happen on your farm. This American Society of Agronomy webinar series will focus on cover crops and their implications on soil health, maximizing yields, livestock considerations, and crop management. The four different webinars are on March 6, 13, 20, and 27, 2014. The time will be 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. and the cost is free, (due to the gracious sponsorships). * You can register or participate in the entire series or individual webinars at your convenience. For more information on the series visit the ASA Education website.

Bring Cover Crops to Your Area!

If you are an Agricultural Service Provider that is starting to work with cover crops and would like to learn more for your staff and your patrons about the uses of cover crops, please contact the Illinois Stewardship Alliance.

Upcoming Events!

March 1-2 Illinois Products Expo
Orr Building, Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield, IL
Over 70 Illinois companies will be providing free food samples and selling their products. A few non-food items, such as soy & herb candles and agricultural-based soaps/lotions will also be available to purchase. The Illinois Wine and Cheese Garden will once again be a featured attraction at the Expo. Illinois wineries will participate; selling wine samples and wine by the glass and the bottle. “Illinois Products” gift baskets will also be given away as door prizes. Learn More.

March 5 Cover Crops Basics Discussion.
Pike County NRCS conference room. 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
March 6 ASA Webinar: Cover Crops and Soil Health
12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.
Learn More

March 13 2014 Conservation Cropping Seminar
8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Heartland Community College in Normal, Illinois.
Learn More

March 13 ASA Webinar: Manure and Cover Crops
12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.
Learn More

March 14 Champaign County "Roots of Improvement 3" workshop
Homer, Illinois. Contact Champaign County SWCD office for more details.
Learn More: (217) 352-3536 Ext. 3

March 18 Morgan County NRCS Cover Crop Workshop/ Discussion
Prairieiland Steam Museum in Jacksonville. Contact Morgan County NRCS office for more details.
Learn More: (217) 243-1435 Ext. 3

March 20 ASA Webinar: Seed selection and Planting
12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.
Learn More

March 21 Cover Crop Termination Workshop
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Farm Bureau room in Princeton, Illinois
March 27 ASA Webinar Cover Crop Management and Termination
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Learn More

For a complete listing of upcoming events, please checkout our Events Calendar on the ISA website.

Have an event that should be included on our event lineup?
Get Involved

Donate
ISA is a non-profit organization. Your donations help us to continue our work in promoting local foods, fair policies, and conservation agriculture.
Donate Now

Become a Member
Be part of an Alliance of consumers, farmers and other local food system stakeholders working to increase production and consumption of local foods in Illinois
Learn More

Spread the word!
When you send this email to a friend, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or connect with us on LinkedIn, you are helping to increase awareness about local food causes in your community. Be a part of the movement and spread the word!

Forward to a Friend

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