

Final Report for DNR Surface Water Management Grant Wisconsin Farmers Union

Goal 1: Increased adoption of no-till, cover crops, and nutrient management plans in supported watersheds.

01. Develop understanding of current level via farmer survey.

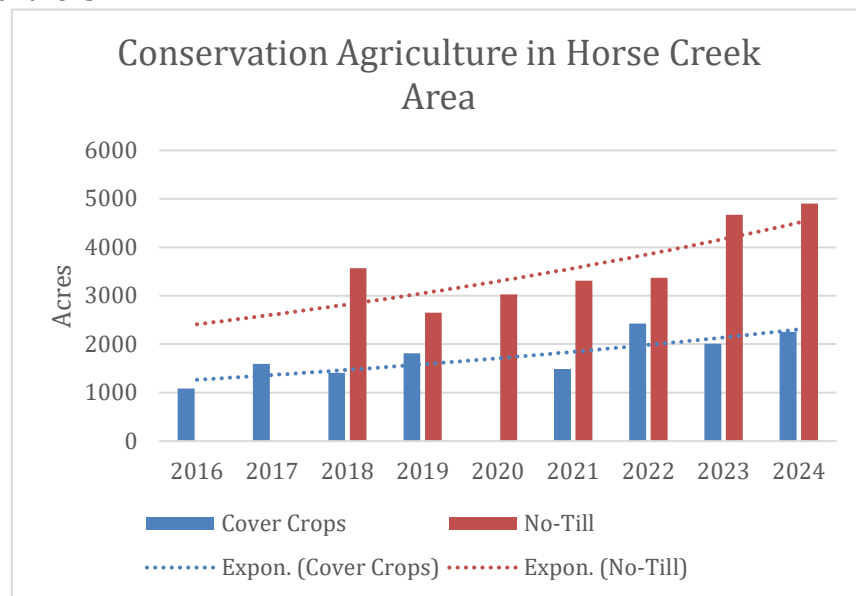
- a. This survey was completed in 2022 in conjunction with the survey team at UWRF and a follow up survey was completed in 2024. A graphic summary of 22 results is included with this submission. A review document of 2024 results compared to 2022 is also attached.
- b. We did not see a marked increase in adoption over 2 years among the farmers we were able to survey. With the hindsight of having one more year out since the survey, we can say we are seeing significant increases and more farmers adopting covers for the first time. Success continue in a 2 steps forward one step back as seasonal challenges continue.

02. Annual BMP incentives were completed in 2022, 2023, and 2024

- c. Incentive applications were mailed out to every identifiable producer in all 4 watersheds each year. An example application letter for the Dry Run watershed group is included in the submittal package
- d. Reduction numbers from practices incentivized are attached. (9,417 acres of cover crops over 2 years in 2022 and 2023). 2024 numbers have not yet been reported to DATCP.

03. Track adoption with partners

- e. Polk County tracked cover crop and no-till adoption in the entire watershed every year. Adoption has continue to increase for no-till and cover crops.



Goal 2: Increased farmer awareness of conservation agriculture

- a. Survey results showed the narrative that cover crops are critical to erosion control has strongly increased, going from 6% in 2022 to 45% in 2024 for agreement from farmers surveyed.



Dennis Busch presented water infiltration research at the Horse Creek Demo plot to farmers at a field day.



Hay River farmer, Stewart Bartz presented to area farmers on pasture management and cover crops at a field day.

- b. 38 educational events in field and at indoor event spaces were hosted by the 4 core farmer-led councils from 2022 through 2024. A sample of flyers from a few of the events is included in the submittal package.



Lance Gunderson presented on implications of healthy soil for crop health to over 130 people at the regional event in 2023

- c. Our goal was to reach 100 large scale farmers.
 - a. Our applications reached 216 farmers annually through the mail.
 - b. Our event attendance was over 1000 attendees across all hosted events, not including non-hosted events the coordinator and member farmers presented at.
 - c. Summary of events held and planning meetings was provided in quarterly reports.

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Coordinator, Tara Greiman, presented on farmer-watershed connection and stewardship at the Red Cedar Conference in 2023.

Goal 3: Improve farmer sentiment towards conservation

a. Press releases, [website](#) updates, [community event presentations](#), [Facebook outreach](#), e-newsletter (archive available [here](#)), and Wisconsin Farmers Union blog and newsletter articles were all written or completed reaching over 2,000 community members in person and thousands of media views annually. Breakdown of outreach numbers by source has been provided in quarterly reports.

b. Our [Soil You Undies campaign](#) was completed for 2 years. Quarterly reports contain information on amounts. This campaign was received particularly well by the [press](#) in 2023 and 2024.



Soil Your Undies provided memorable and photogenic educational opportunities in media and at community events to talk about soil health and the connection to farming and water quality.

Undies & Education on the Road

If you've been to a dairy breakfast or other farm-related event this summer, you may have seen our soiled undies of 2022 on display to help talk about soil health, farm profits, and water quality with passersby. Thanks to the Bartz family for modeling next to the display at the Dunn County Dairy Breakfast even though everyone's reticent to be too close underwear this dirty.