

Summer 2017



Basin Buzz

*Want to receive
Fox Demo Farms
Field Days Updates?*



LOWER FOX DEMONSTRATION FARMS NETWORK

**JOIN THE LOWER FOX
DEMONSTRATION FARMS
NETWORK TEXT LIST!**

TO JOIN, PLEASE TEXT:

FOXDEMOFARMS TO 88202

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
FOLLOW:**



www.foxdemofarms.o

FOX DEMO FARMS' SUMMER FIELD DAY

Wednesday, June 14

TOUR FARMS AND SEE CONSERVATION IN ACTION

RESTORE Soil Health

REDUCE Runoff Pollution

IMPROVE Water Quality

SUPPORT a Strong Regional Economy

**Last stop: Dedication ceremony for the NEW Water Cover Crop
Interseeder to Brown Co. Land & Water Conservation Department**

For More Information: www.foxdemofarms.org



Brickstead Dairy

Goes All-In on Conservation



Dan Brick is the fifth-generation owner and producer of Brickstead Dairy in Greenleaf, WI. The family farm was established in 1848 and has been in the family ever since.

In 1996, Dan became a partner with his father, Gene. In the years since, the dairy farm has greatly expanded from 20 cows when Gene inherited the land to the current population of 900 cows. While the operational size of Brickstead Dairy has changed

Photo credit Captured by Di. Dan and his wife, Melanie, have three sons, Sawyer and twins Ian and Elijah. The three boys love growing up on the farm and spending time on the land. For Dan, it's about ensuring

over the years, conservation

"Sustainability is very important to me because we want to ensure that the legacy of Brickstead Dairy continues. And to do that, we have to



introduced him to a variety of cover crop mixes. Over the next four years, Dan experimented with these mixes, as well as reduced tillage. During this time, he began to see changes in soil health; however, he knew that he had only begun to scratch

remains to be at the heart of this family business and the pulse that keeps the farm running.

Going All-In

Dan's journey to become 100 percent no-till and cover crops began in 2009, when he was first approached by a seed salesman, who

the surface. To experience the full potential of conservation agriculture, he would have to fully embrace the practices. Through his involvement with the Fox Demo Farms project, Dan expanded his conservation practices, which has led him to where he is today. By beginning small and learning from his mistakes, he gained confidence in the system and his ability to implement the practices.

Cover Crops: Planting into Green

Over the past few years, Dan has begun to “plant into green,” meaning that he plants into a living cover, such as triticale, wheat, or winter rye. The idea is to have a cover crop, which was established the year before, growing during the period when it is too wet and too cold to plant corn or soybeans.

“We rely on having a growing cover crop to help keep the soil biology going,” says Dan, which is important when building soil organic matter, improving soil health, and increasing infiltration rates.

By planting into a living cover crop, Dan ensures that the ground is continuously covered and therefore; the soil and its nutrients stay on the field where they work for him and not in local waterways. Additionally, the cover crops help to absorb and store the excess moisture, which will then be accessible to the crop during the drier summer months.

When Dan decided that he was going to convert his land to 100 percent no-till and cover crops, he took the investment made in his field cultivator and disc and put it into equipment designed for conservation practices. His decision allowed him to reinvest in equipment needed to plant into green, such as a row cleaner and new closing wheels. The row cleaner helps to push the cover crop down, giving the corn planter access to the soil. Having a closing wheel that properly closes the seed-vee is essential for no-till planting. According to Brent

Petersen, the Fox Demo Farms project manager, closing the seed-vee is essential for good soil-to-seed contact. By failing to do so, the seed is vulnerable to dry conditions, which can negatively affect germination.



“I have decided to drop my crop insurance for the 2017 season because I am confident I won’t have the same level of risk associated with

LOWER FOX DEMONSTRATION FARMS NETWORK

2 New Demo
Farms in 2016

Fox Demo Farms Grows



Fox Demo Farms is pleased to announce that we added two new farms to the project, New Horizons Dairy and Vande Wettering Farms. Both farms were actively implementing conservation practices, so we are excited to learn from their experience and to be a part of their future conservation efforts. To learn more about the great work these farms are doing, join us on Wednesday, June 14, 2017 for our Summer Field Day! For more information, check out the Fox Demo Farm's website: www.foxdemofarms.org

New Horizons Dairy

New Horizons Dairy has been a family operation since 1899 and as Dave looks to his three adult sons, who are all involved in the family farm, he hopes that the legacy that began with his great-grandfather will continue for generations to come. Dave's middle son, Derek, reflects that his two young children and their cousins love growing up and playing on the farm, just as he did with his two brothers, Matthew and Ross. Both Matthew and Ross work closely with the farm's cattle, while Derek has been working closely with his father to explore new opportunities with no-till practices and planting cover crops. Ensuring that the next generation inherits a thriving farm is something very important to the Van De Hey family, which is why they focus on practices that are mutually beneficial for the environment and for their family farm.

Steps Towards Conservation

In 2007, Dave and Derek first implemented no-till practices and began planting cover crops on roughly 10 percent of their land. As they learned more about the practices and started to experience their benefits, they began to increase acreage. Starting small allowed them to experiment with different mixes and crop rotations. Knowing what they know today, Dave and Derek are happy that they took the initiative and with the help of the Fox Demo Farms they continue to explore ways to implement more conservation practices on their land.



Derek Van De Hey no-till planting into a field that had previously been alfalfa with oats and radish cover crop. Photo credit Fox Demo Farms.

New Horizons Dairy, like all the Fox Demo Farms, have had a busy spring. Planting cover crops in a no-till system, improves the soil health and its ability to infiltrate snowmelt and spring rains. As a result, these fields are more structurally stable than conventional fields, which is beneficial during rainy springs like what we have experienced this year. For producers, timing is everything. Weather often dictates planting schedules; however, if improving soil health provides more flexibility during the spring months, then producers using conservation practices have an advantage over those using conventional

methods.

Dave and Derek have tried new combinations of no-till planting into cover crops that were established last fall, including corn into barley and radishes, alfalfa seeding into winter rye, and corn into alfalfa that had died out. Additionally, they have experimented with planting red clover first and then seeding their corn.

We look forward to seeing the results later this year.

Vande Wattering Farms



The Vande Wattering family has been farming in Greenleaf, Wisconsin for more than 150 years. Tom and Bill, represent the fifth generation to work the land and as they look to Tom's two adult sons, Luke and Tyler, they are happy to see that the family tradition will continue for years to come. For Tom and Bill, working with family has been one the greatest parts of farming; therefore, passing down productive land to Luke and Tyler has influenced their ambitious efforts to improve soil health on their farm.

Steps Towards Conservation

Tom and Bill began implementing conservation practices on their land in the mid-2000s. They first began no-till planting; however, they quickly realized that they were not experiencing the full benefits of the practice. According to the brothers, "the missing part was the cover crops...we had hard soil without it, which made it difficult for the seed to take to the soil." Recognizing and communicating these lessons are an important part of the Fox Demo Farms' mission, so we are excited to have Vande Watterings as part of the Fox Demo Farms team.

In 2016, Tom and Bill began to explore the potential benefits of managed grazing on their land. They began small with 25 grazing acres and plan to expand in 2017 to 85 grazing acres and 125 acres of pasture cover crops. The brothers plan to interseed red clover and a cover crop blend into corn, which will be used as pasture this fall for their 65 heifers. They are experimenting with different population densities to evaluate which stands are most

Cover crop growth when interseeded into corn. Photo credit Tom Vande Wattering.

successful for managed grazing. Managed grazing has many advantages including, improved soil structure and infiltration rates, improved animal health and welfare, financial savings from reduced feed costs and labor costs, as well as improved wildlife habitat.

Additionally, the brothers have been busy no-till planting into a wide range of cover crops that were estab-

*Ready to try it
for yourself?*



AIR SEEDER/12-ROW INTERSEEDER AVAILABLE TO PLANT COVER CROPS IN

Farmers in eastern Outagamie County, northern Calumet County and parts of Brown County in the Lower Fox River watershed who are interested in planting cover crops this summer and fall can borrow a new Valmar air seeder and a 12-row cover crop interseeder free of charge and give it a trial run on their fields, courtesy of The Nature Conservancy and Brown and Outagamie counties.

The Conservancy donated \$20,000 to Brown and Outagamie counties to purchase and retrofit the Valmar air seeder and 12-row interseeder. They are making them available to area producers to help reduce soil and nutrient runoff from agricultural fields and improve water quality in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay.

The Valmar seeder is a versatile unit that allows farmers to seed cover crops into corn and soybean fields in a fast, efficient way by integrating cover crop seeding into a

traditional pass. The seeder can be used in many configurations and modified for use on a variety of types of equipment. A popular application is using the Valmar seeder to broadcast cover crop seed ahead of a vertical till unit to help improve soil and seed contact all in a single pass. The unit can seed a variety of different cover crops at a low cost to producers.

The 12-row interseeder allows farmers to seed cover crops into corn crops early in the season when the corn is in stages V3-V7 (4" to 24"). The interseeded cover crop begins to grow, but then the corn shades the cover crop putting it into a dormant state. Once the corn is harvested or sunlight can reach the soil, the cover crop will begin growing again, giving it a head start compared to a cover crop planted after harvest. The advantage of this system is having a cover crop already established rather than putting pressure on farmers during the

harvest season. The early seeding has been proven by many universities and private trials to have no effect on yield if proper cover crop species are used. If interested in interseeding, it is recommended producers take a look at their herbicide program to make sure residuals won't get in the way of successful interseeding.

Planting cover crops helps reduce runoff from agricultural fields which can contribute sediment and nutrients like phosphorus to Green Bay, causing water quality problems and algal blooms as well as a "dead zone" for fish and other aquatic life in the bay. Planting cover crops protects fields during the winter months, can improve the health of the soil and keep the soil in place during spring rains and snow melt.

For more details and to check the unit's availability, interested landowners should contact Andy Kiefer, agronomist with Outagamie County Land Conservation Department at 920-574-7539 or 920-832-5073.

Additional equipment available in the Lower Fox River Watershed



John Deere 7200 Corn Planter equipped with Dawn's ZRX rollers that give the planter the ability to roll down standing grain crops (rye, triticale) and plant in the same pass. The rolled down grain crops creates a thick mat of residue that protect the soil surface, mitigates erosion, and builds soil health.



6 Row Interseeder (Interseeder Technologies)

This equipment was purchased by Outagamie County with funds through a Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant. Priority use will be given to producers in the Plum and Kankapot Creek Watersheds due to grant requirements through 2020.

For more details and to check availability, interested landowners should contact: Andy Kiefer, andy.kiefer@outagamie.org, 920.574.7539



Bazooka wavy coulters manure injector.

5

Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests

1

PLANNING

Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

2

APPLICATION

With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.

3

ELIGIBILITY

Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.

4

RANKING

NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.

5

IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

5 Steps to Assistance infographic credit: www.nrcs.usda.gov

SIGN UP NOW!

2017 FUNDS & ASSISTANCE

Interested in streambanks, waterways, cover crops, interseeding, buffers, nutrient management planning or other conservation practices?

Contact your Land Conservation Department or local NRCS office to determine if funding is available for your project.

Brown County LWCD: (920) 391-4621

Brown County NRCS: (920) 884-9210

Calumet County LWCD: (920) 849-1442

Calumet County NRCS: (920) 849-1444

Outagamie County LCD: (920) 832-5073

Outagamie County NRCS: (920) 733-1575

Winnebago County LWCD: (920) 232-1950

Winnebago County NRCS: (920) 424-0329

Unique, flexible cost-sharing opportunities are available in 2017 for those who own or operate land located within either the Plum Creek or Kankapot Creek watershed.

Funding opportunities include:

- Cover Crops
- Harvestable Buffers
- Grassed Waterways
- Streambank Restorations & more...

For questions or more information, please contact Jeremy Freund at (920)574-6965 or jeremy.freund@outagamie.org





PO Box 1861
Appleton, WI 54911

Basin Buzz

INSIDE THE BUZZ

- Updates from Lower Fox Demonstration Farms Network
- Brickstead Dairy Goes All-In on Conservation
- Fox Demo Farms Grow
- Equipment Available for producers in the Lower Fox River Watershed

For more information on topics in this newsletter or to Sign up online to receive watershed updates via email

SAVE THE DATE!

FOX DEMO FARMS' SUMMER FIELD DAY

JUNE 14, 2017
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

TOUR FARMS AND SEE CONSERVATION IN ACTION
RESTORE SOIL HEALTH
REDUCE RUNOFF POLLUTION
IMPROVE WATER QUALITY
SUPPORT A STRONG REGIONAL ECONOMY

Last stop: Dedication ceremony for the NEW Water Cover Crop Interseeder to Brown Co. Land & Water Conservation Department

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.FOXDEMOFARMS.ORG

