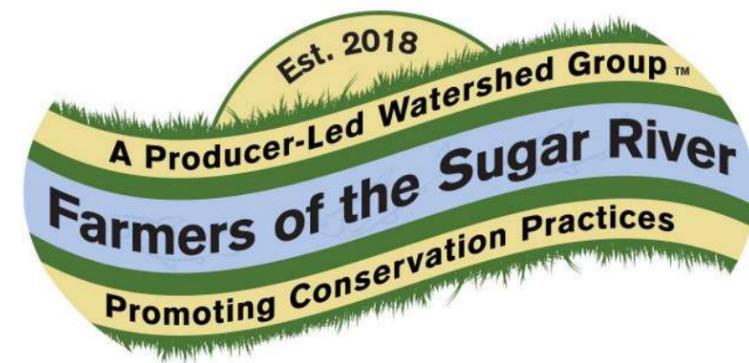


**Farmers of the Sugar River
Green County LWCD
1627 4th Ave. West
Monroe, WI 53566**



Recap of Events!

Livestock Carcass Composting Field Day

It's legal to compost your deadstock on your farm. It's not legal to leave a carcass exposed for more than 24 hours April-November or more than 48 hours December-March if you know of the carcass. See center fold page for a simple "how to" from Cornell. Tonya has more resources if you would like to learn more- just reach out 608-325-4195 ext 121 or email Tonya.Gratz@wi.nacdnet.net

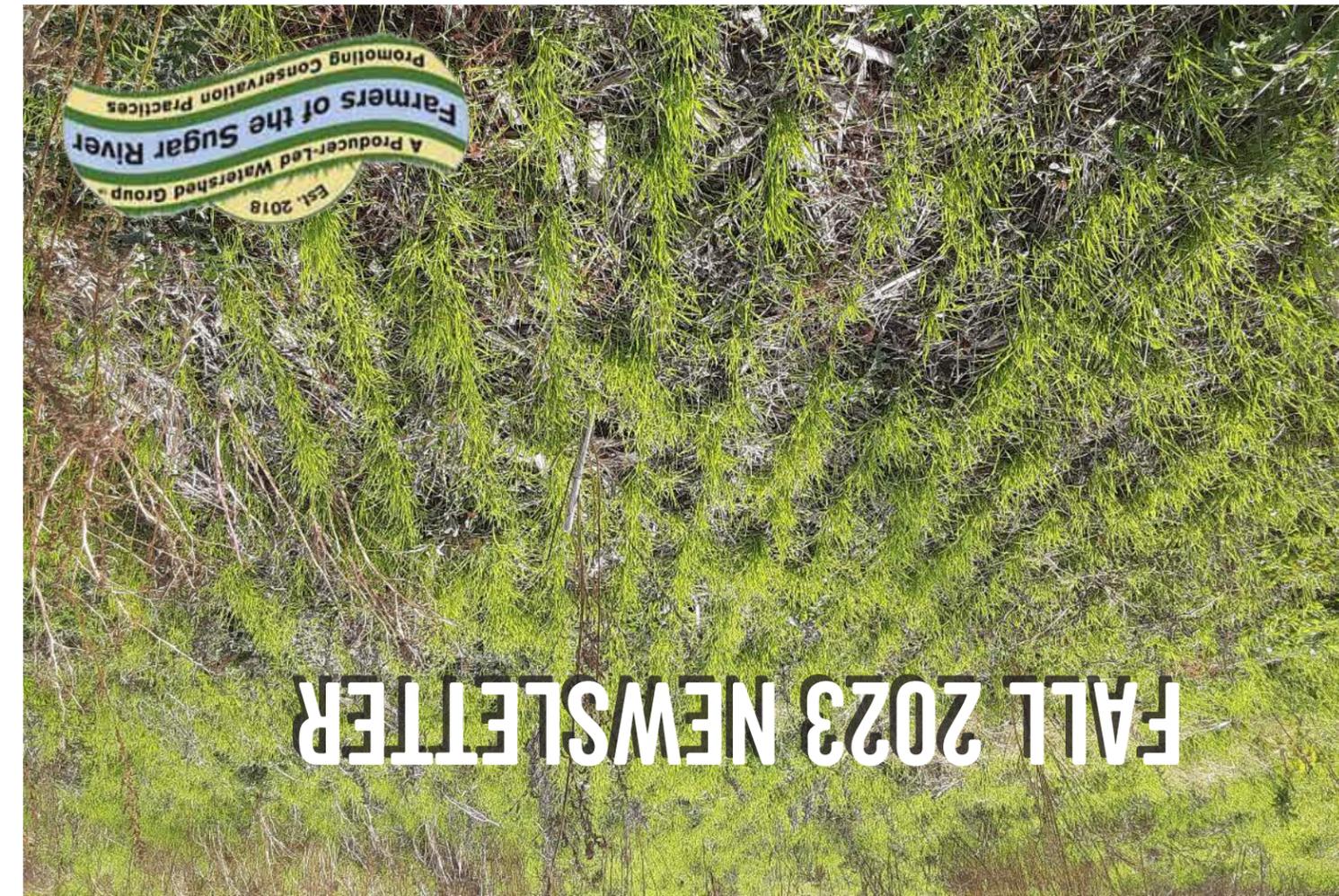


Green County Groundwater Quality Update & Discussion

There was good attendance at the meeting and good conversations. We are taking the discussion and suggestions to put together an action plan with UWEX that will help move the whole county in the right direction for education about groundwater, nitrates and what we can do to reduce the impact of nitrates leaching into the groundwater. One way to help understand how much nitrogen our soil can feed the corn crop- consider signing up for a zero-nitrogen demo on your farm. Stay tuned for more information.

Pollinator & Prairie Field Day

Pollinator & Prairies- Micah Kloppenburg from the Xerces Society was present and is willing to work with landowners to create seed mixes to fit their interests and soil. Prairies and woods help native and non-native (honey bees) pollinators. Many rely on hollow stems to overwinter and lay eggs. The day we were at Bob & Sherry Zurfluh's was filled with lots of little hover flies. Their life cycle includes a larva stage that eats (soybean) aphids and they need pollinator plants as adults to complete their life cycle. Coupling a prairie field with row crops can provide beneficial insects that prey on the non-desirable insects. The Farmers of the Sugar River will pay an incentive payment to install a prairie/ pollinator field (see cost sharing/ incentives list). Fields that are odd, small or hard to farm make great places to plant to pollinator habitat. There are also other programs that can be used to accomplish this, like CRP, CREP, CSP and EQIP.



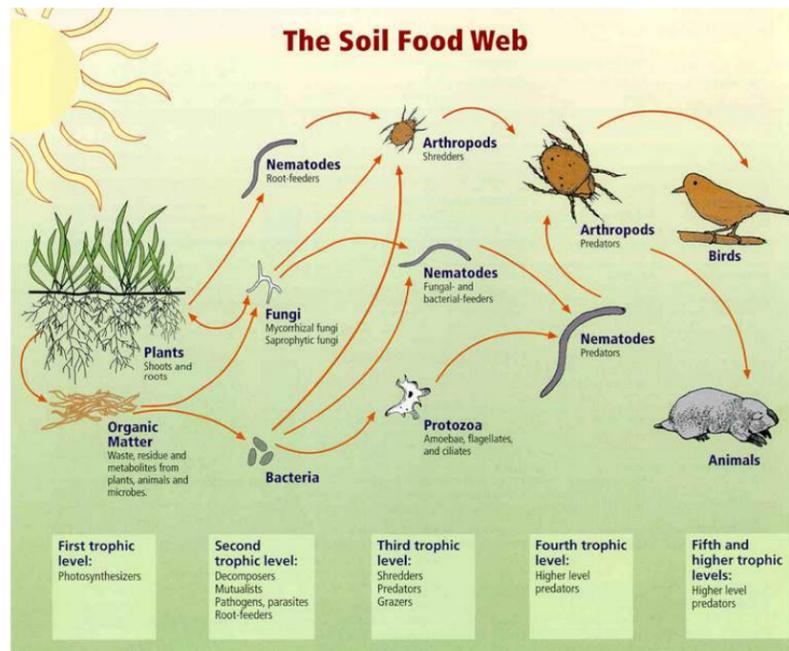
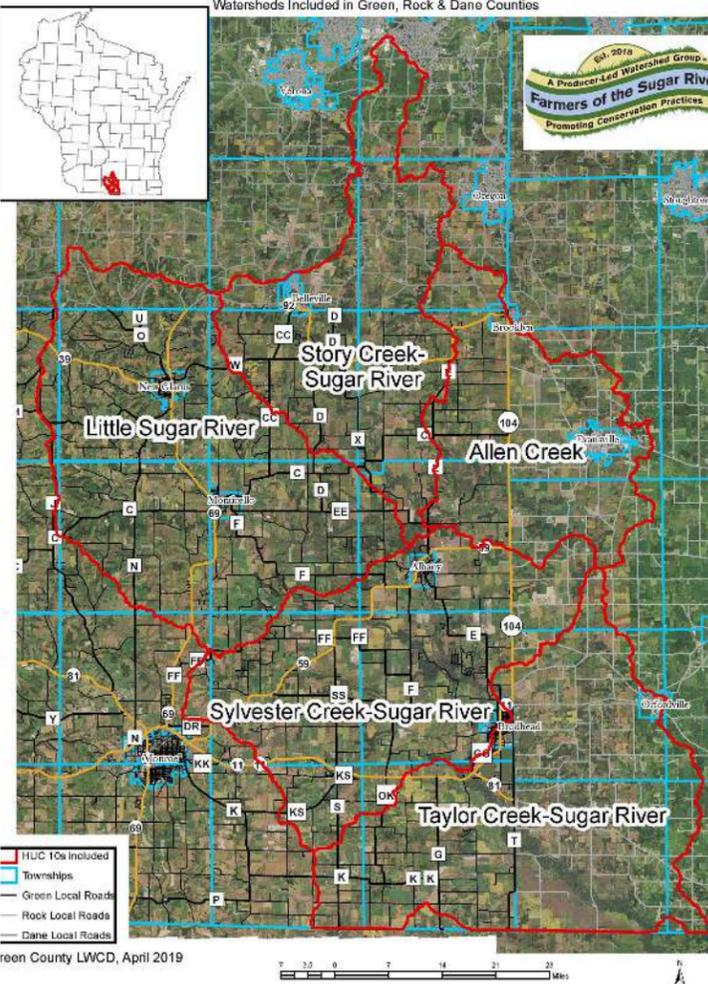
For more information contact Tonya @ 608-426-2218 or Tonya.Gratz@wi.nacdnet.net

What is the Farmers of the Sugar River watershed group?

Mission Statement: A producer-led watershed group that shares and learns from other farmers to be profitable, protect and increase soil functions, and improve water quality in the watershed. We strive to teach other local farmers how to make conservation systems work on their farms to be part of the solution for cleaner water and sustainable farms.

Farmers of the Sugar River

Watersheds Included in Green, Rock & Dane Counties



Relationships between soil food web, plants, organic matter, and birds and mammals
Image courtesy of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Benefits noted from using cover crops:

- Chance to graze animals and add manure to system
- Increase of soil organic matter- put carbon back into soil
- Less compaction- live roots keep soil aggregated
- Help cycle nutrients- brings and keeps N, P & K in the root zone for next crop's use
- Roots feed the biology in soil until freeze up (longer than cash crops)
- Protect soil particles from moving and dislodging from water and wind erosion

Application for cost sharing conservation practices for 2023

Name: _____ Optional Farm Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Email Address: _____

Best phone number- landline or cell (circle which): _____

Do you want to be added to our email list? Yes or no Text list? Yes or No

Operation type: Dairy / Grain / Beef / other

How many total cropland acres do you manage? _____

Do you have a current Nutrient Management Plan? _____ if not, would you like to learn how to write one for your farm? _____

Current crop rotation and tillage to plant each crop- applies to the acres that would receive the incentive payment: (example: corn grain and soybeans- no till corn, field finisher soybeans)

Practice you'd like to receive an incentive payment for/ change to your system: (example: cover crop after soybeans) _____ on _____ acres (payment caps at 66.6ac, but you can report more)

If you're planting pollinator habitat, what was the cover on the space you're converting? _____

How many acres are you planting to pollinator habitat? _____

fill out and return to Tonya Gratz at USDA Service Center- in person, emailed or text!

Please pass this on to a neighbor or friend and invite them along to a field day or meeting! If you are interested in learning more, to get on our email list (more frequent communication) or you want to keep receiving a paper newsletter please contact Tonya Gratz via email Tonya.Gratz@wi.nacdnet.net or by phone (608)325-4195 ext. 121 or 608-426-2218

We're planning some pop-up field days this fall (little notice) on interseeding/ grazing and different cover crop mixes. If you aren't on email or text, let Tonya know a way to contact you, if you're interested.



Farmers of the Sugar River

Application for cost sharing conservation practices for 2023

Farmers of the Sugar River encourage and challenge farmers **to try a new conservation practice or to improve it the next year (more species, more acres, less tillage, ect).**

The following practices are being offered:

*Incentive payment of \$15/acre (with a maximum of \$1000/ farm or 66.6 ac) per practice (can be stacked with other practices):

1. First time no-till planting of small grains, alfalfa, corn or soybeans- especially includes planting green
2. Low disturbance manure injection
3. Cover crops (by drilling, aerial, or broadcast)
4. Roller crimper to terminate cover crops

*Soil Testing- We'll pay for soil health tests, soil nitrate tests and/or biomass sampling of your fields to help you make better fertilization decisions. Samples sent in for analysis at AgSource.

*Pollinator plantings- We'll pay \$150/ac to plant an annual pollinator planting for honey bees and other pollinators (lasts 1 year) and \$500/ac to plant a perennial pollinator habitat for monarchs (lasts many years). Site prep recommendations will be given.

Honey bee mix (possible)

Buckwheat
Phacelia
Berseem Clover
Crimson Clover
Annual Sunflower
Red Clover
Oats
Pearl Millet

spring planting

Monarch mix (possible)

Purple Prairie Clover
Stiff Goldenrod
Ox-eye Sunflower
Golden Alexanders
Black-Eyed Susan
Bergamot
Common Milkweed
Yellow Coneflower
Butterfly Milkweed
Hoary Vervain

Cupplant
Rattlesnake Master
Purple Coneflower
New England Aster
Culver's Root
Big Bluestem
Little Bluestem
Indiangrass
Sideoats Grama
Switchgrass

spring or fall planting

Farmers of the Sugar River are invested in learning and growing of information through practices as provided above. We encourage recipients of cost share monies, as well as those interested and doing their own conservation practices *without cost share monies*, to provide feedback and insight into their practices, results (good/bad/no change), and future changes from practices tried. Please use Tonya.Gratz@wi.nacdnet.net as a contact for practice payment availability, sharing of information, and mentor opportunities.

All incentive/cost share payments will be dependent on available funds.

For a lot more information check out the webpage: <https://greencountywcd.com/farmers-of-the-sugar-river/>

Local cover crop seed suppliers:

Mike Plucinski: 608-558-2711
mpservices@tds.net

Jake Kaderly: 608-558-5589
jkaderly@yahoo.com

Justin Blum: 608-214-9785
Blum623@gmail.com

Scott Timm: 608-214-4524
Scotttim103@gmail.com

Aaron Gifford: 608-558-9300
Aaron.gifford@plantpioneer.com

Paul Kennell: 608-379-0585
landline: 608-439-1767

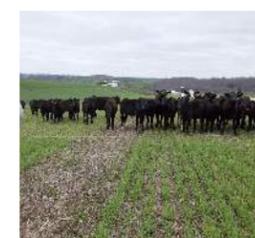
Cover crops after corn silage in Southern WI



Spring barley, oats can be great cover crops for after corn silage in Southern WI if they can be planted by September 15th-20th. Spring barley and oats will winter-kill in Wisconsin so they need to be planted early enough to put on sufficient fall growth to provide residue to reduce winter and spring erosion. Barley and oats could also be planted into standing corn silage (overseeding).



Annual ryegrass has been successfully planted into corn around the V5 growth stage, known as interseeding. Several farmers have been using this technique to establish cover crops in June, so the covers are ready to really grow after corn silage is harvested. They have had success with getting a mix of species established at this timing.



Cereal rye (also referred to as winter rye) is the most reliable cover crop for late fall seeding. Cereal rye is extremely winter hardy and can be planted very late and still survive the winter. Cereal rye will either need to be terminated in the spring prior to cash crop planting or it can be harvested for forage.

Triticale is another cover crop option if the goal is to use the cover crop for a forage. Triticale tends to have a higher forage value but the optimal harvest is 10-14 days later than cereal rye, pushing back the planting of the next crop.

**If harvesting the cover crop as a forage, please review restrictions of herbicides used during the previous two growing seasons.*



Brassicas

It is not recommended to plant any of the brassicas after corn silage. There is not enough growing degree days left in the season to provide enough growth to gain any cover crop benefits.

Legumes

It is not recommended to plant legumes after corn silage. There is not enough growing season left for legumes to develop nodules and fix nitrogen.



COVER CROPS AFTER CORN GRAIN OR SOYBEANS

Cereal Rye is the hardiest (it can germinate at the lowest temperature of most cover crops at 34 degrees), making it the most popular option for a cover crop at this timing of the year. It will over winter, so spring management needs to be thought of, but this also could be a great opportunity to plant your next crop green.

Nitrogen Use Efficiency/ Zero N Plot

LOOKING FOR FARMERS TO PARTICIPATE/ HOST A PLOT IN 2024- LET TONYA KNOW!

Asking size is around 1 acre plot- to be designed to work with your planting equipment- treatments are typically 300 feet long by your planter width. The demonstration uses a zero-N test strip to measure how much the field yields without any inputs. These test strips are valuable as a soil health indicator and can determine the N supplied by the soil and the efficiency of the applied N. This assessment gives the true economic efficiency of N applied and the N at risk of being lost to the environment.



**Save the Date:
Annual Meeting
Friday, February 9, 2024 at
Albany Lions Club**

**Keynote speaker- Blake Vince
(article below about him) &
presentation on Soil Food Web**

Cover Cropping Improves Land and Bank Balance

Ontario farmer Blake Vince has harnessed the power of cover crops on his operation
By Jennifer Paige of the Manitoba Co-operator Published: December 19, 2016

Despite not having cattle on his operation, Blake Vince says he is still a livestock farmer.

“Where my livestock are is below my feet and sadly we forget that. The soil is alive, it is a collection of living organisms,” Vince, a Canadian Nuffield Scholar and fifth-generation Ontario farmer, said during a presentation at the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association’s national conference last month in Winnipeg.

“It is not merely that four letter word, dirt. We need to stop calling soil dirt in Canada. It is a living, breathing collection of organisms.”

Located in Merlin, Ont., Vince operates a 1,300-acre farm with his family, producing corn, soybeans and winter wheat through management practices that focus on soil health.

After years of practising no-till techniques, Vince took things a step further and began experimenting with a multi-species cover crop blend to protect and enrich his soils.

“Soil was never created with a collection of monoculture. When we think about diversity at the soil level and how soil was initially created, it wasn’t created with just four or five different species,” Vince said. “This system, using a multi-species cover crop can start to mimic how soil was created, with a collection of root exudates from each individual species.”

Vince plants an 18-species cover crop mix after his winter wheat harvest, which typically comes off in the second week of July.

“I am using about six legumes, four grasses, some broadleaf plants like sunflower, all working together to try and drive that biological activity,” Vince said. “If we drive the energy from the sun into the soil via root exudates, that is how we are going to increase soil organic matter. And, when we do this it is also capturing carbon, increasing soil health, fixing nitrogen and feeding the soil with that biodiversity.”

By using a multi-species cover crop mix, farmer Blake Vince has seen less wind, solar, and water erosion, and increased water infiltration and carrying capacity in his fields.

Once winter arrives and the cover crops start to die, Vince says it provides the added benefit of capturing snow, which recharges the soil profile.

“This is another viable tool. Instead of all of that winter precipitation ending up on the roadside ditch, or along the fencerow, it is retained in the soil,” Vince said. While focusing on building the soil, he adds there have been numerous other benefits from the cover crops.

“You can use less nitrogen, which is money in my pocket. They completely reduce the need for tillage, wind, water or solar erosion is minimized, there is increased biological activity, and we are capturing solar energy for 12 months of the year,” Vince said. “With these cover crops we are also able to increase our water infiltration, our water-carrying capacity or drought-proofing our soil, and we are increasing our financial yield.”

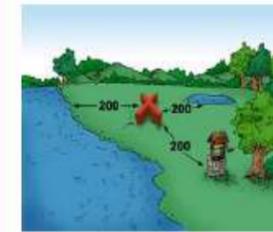
When it comes to determining what to include in your cover crop mix, Vince says it is best to align yourself with an educated seed seller and focus on diversity.

“When looking at what species to use, we need to draw four quadrants. We have warm-season grass, cool-season grass, and warm-season broadleaf, cool-season broadleaf,” Vince said. “And, we need to have at least one species from each one of those quadrants and then we need to look at building out our blends from there.” By including species from each quadrant, you will spread out your risk, as it doesn’t matter what kind of weather Mother Nature throws at you, something will grow.

“Diversity spreads out and alleviates my risk for my investment dollars,” Vince said. “Every year the blend or the final product will look different but I think that is the energy that is created with the power of diversity.” For more information on Vince and his Nuffield Scholar report entitled, *Conserving Farm Land with Cover Crops and the Importance of Biodiversity*, visit the Nuffield Canada website.

Natural Rendering: Composting Livestock Mortality

Key Points of Static Pile Carcass Composting



Select Site

1. Select site that is well drained, at least 200 feet from water courses, sinkholes, seasonal seeps, or other landscape features that indicate the area is hydrologically sensitive.



Prepare Base

2. Lay 24-inch bed of bulky, absorbing organic material contains some sizeable pieces 4-6 inches long. Utility and municipal wood chips work well. Ensure the base is large enough to allow for 2-foot clearance around the carcass.



Place Animal & Lance Rumen

3. Lay animal in the center of the bed. Lance the rumen to avoid bloating and possible explosion. Explosive release of gases can result in odor problems and it will blow the cover material off the composting carcass.

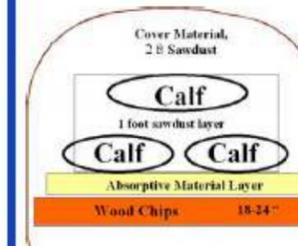


Cover

4. Cover carcass with dry, high-carbon material, old silage, sawdust or dry stall bedding (some semi-solid manure will expedite the process).



Building pile in Washington County, NY in 5° F temperatures



Layer Young Animals

5. For young animals, layer mortalities with a minimum of 2 feet of carbon material between layers.



Cornell PRO-DALEY



Cornell Cooperative Extension



Cornell Waste Management Institute

Source: “Natural Rendering: Composting Livestock Mortality and Butcher Waste” fact sheet

These posters were developed by the Cornell Waste Management Institute • cwmi.cornell.edu

Let Sit 4 to 6 Months

6. Let sit for 4-6 months, then check to see if carcass is fully degraded.

Reuse the Composted Material

7. Reuse the composted material for another carcass compost pile, or remove large bones and land apply.

Cleanliness

8. Site cleanliness is the most important aspect of composting, it deters scavengers, and helps control odors and keeps good neighbor relations.



Turning Note

Carcass and butcher residual piles should not be turned early in the process unless there are no neighbors that would be affected. Odor is a big issue most of the time. After 3 months, turning is an option and will speed the curing process.