

Midwest Cover Crops Council
State/Province Report for March 11-12, 2008 Meeting in Indianapolis

State/Province Name: **Indiana**

Contact Information

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Research

1. Winter wheat cover crop used in tile drainage research project, where nitrate measured in tile drainflow. Long-term (20+yrs) but no simultaneous comparison without cover crop. Could make more measurements related to N cycling, if regional collaboration.
2. New work (plus old work) on biomass crops (e.g. switchgrass)
3. Former work on cover crops and soil quality, N uptake, crop yield, N fixation, erosion
4. Ongoing work on pest suppression (disease, nematode, weeds) and in vegetable production
5. Always ongoing work on forages for hay or grazing

Extension/Education

1. Demonstration sites on farmers' fields. These are usually initiated by farmer interest but may be facilitated by NRCS, SWCD, Extension, or agronomic consultant.
2. Field days and winter meetings. These are sometimes held at the field demonstration sites. Others are part of broader field days or extension meetings. Speakers are usually NRCS, extension, or agronomic consultant, along with the farmer cooperator.
3. County SWCDs this year were provided small grants from Indiana State Dept. of Agriculture (ISDA) through State Soil Conservation Board, to promote cover crops in their counties. Field days, winter meetings, and availability of extension materials from numerous sources.
4. Discussion of cover crops as a way to reduce nitrate leaching to tile drains, is included as a standard part of extension talks on tile drainage and water quality.

Communication

1. There will likely be some local publicity associated with county SWCD education events, as mentioned under extension.
2. There has been some inclusion of cover crops ideas in media interviews with Purdue staff, when asked about corn ethanol and the potential environmental impacts. Both cover crops in corn/soybean systems, and perennial herbaceous biomass crops, have been included in some of the articles and interviews.

Policy

1. NRCS in Indiana has an "energy bundle", which provides additional incentive payments if have all 4 energy practices (cover crops, no-till, nutrient mgmt, buffers).
2. NRCS in Indiana had an emergency program for cover crops last year, due to feed shortage, and this yielded a HUGE increase in cover crop acreage, and a shortage of seed.
3. NRCS payments for cover crops in EQIP, CSP.