

Midwest Cover Crops Council
Indiana: Report for March 13-14, 2018 Meeting in Fargo, ND

Contact Information

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Highlights

One new Extension publication

- Woodyard, J. and E. Kladivko. 2017. Four strategies to improve your field's soil health. AY-363-W. https://edustore.purdue.edu/item.asp?Item_Number=AY-363-W
- A series of 15 reports on results of farmer cooperator soil health tests, posted on-line at the Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) website. www.ccsin.org, look under Soil Health Hubs tab, then CCSI Interim reports.

Research publications

- Rorick, J.D., and E.J. Kladivko. (2017). Cereal rye cover crop effects on soil carbon and physical properties in southeastern Indiana. *J. Soil Water Cons.* 72:260-265
- Abendroth, Lori J., Daryl E. Herzmann, Giorgi Chighladze, Eileen J. Kladivko, Matthew J. Helmers, Laura Bowling, Michael Castellano, Richard M. Cruse, Warren A. Dick, Norman R. Fausey, Jane Frankenberger, Aaron J. Gassmann, Alexandra Kravchenko, Rattan Lal, Joseph G. Lauer, Daren S. Mueller, Emerson D. Nafziger, Nsalambi Nkongolo, Matthew O'Neal, John E. Sawyer, Peter Scharf, Jeffrey S. Strock, and Maria B. Villamil. 2017. Sustainable Corn CAP Research Data (USDA-NIFA Award No. 2011-68002-30190). National Agricultural Library - ARS - USDA. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15482/USDA.ADC/1411953>
- Roth, R., M.D. Ruffatti, P.D. O'Rourke, S.D. Armstrong. 2017. A cost analysis approach to valuating cover crop environmental and nitrogen cycling benefits: A central Illinois on-farm case study. *Agricultural Systems*, DOI:10.1016/J.agsy.2017.10.007
- Armstrong, S.D., R. Roth, and C. Lacey. 2017. Do Conventional Comparative Cost Efficiency Analyses Adequately Value Nitrogen Loss reduction best management practices? *Agriculture Research & Technology*, DOI: 10.19080/ARTOAJ.2017.12.555861
- Loux, et al. 2017. Influence of Cover Crops on Management of Amaranthus Species in Glyphosate and Glufusinate-Resistant Soybean. *Weed Technology* 31(4):487-495. 2017 <https://doi.org/10.1017/wet.2017.30>

Graduate students and post-docs

- 4 Ph.D. student, 8 M.S. students, and one post-doc

Conference Abstracts

- Woodyard, J.D., S.M. Zuber, E.J. Kladvko. 2017. Cover Crop and No-Tillage Impacts on Soil Health Indicators Over a Growing Season. (ASA/SSSA)
- Zuber, S.M. and E.J. Kladvko. 2017. Assessing effectiveness of commercial soil health tests for conservation cropping systems in Indiana. (ASA/SSSA)
- Benally, N.A., S.M. Zuber, and E.J. Kladvko. 2017. Soil active carbon and aggregation measurements to help farmers assess progress in soil health. (ASA/SSSA)
- Armstrong, S.D., C. O'Reilly, B. Bruening, C. Lacey, R. Roth, M. D. Ruffatti and W. T. Deppe. 2017. Cover Crop Adoption and Performance on a Watershed Scale: Potential Impacts on Water Quality. (ASA/SSSA)
- Nevins, C.J., C. Lacey, L. A. Hoagland, R. F. Turco, C. Nakatsu and S. D. Armstrong. 2017. Soil Microbial Community Dynamics over the Growing Season of a Corn Agroecosystem after Winter Cover Cropping. (ASA/SSSA)
- Liu, S., S. D. Armstrong and T. G. Gardner. 2017. Winter Cover Crops Influence Bacterial Community Structure. (ASA/SSSA)
- Miller H., and S. D. Armstrong. 2017. Predicting the Contribution of Soil EMN to Total Corn N Uptake. (ASA/SSSA)
- Lacey, C., C. J. Nevins, H. Miller and S. D. Armstrong. 2017. The Impact of Cover Crops, Tillage, and Crop Rotation on Yield in Midwest Grain Systems. (ASA/SSSA)
- Nevins, C.J., C. Lacey, L. A. Hoagland, R. F. Turco, C. Nakatsu and S. D. Armstrong. 2017. Impact of Cover Crop Species on Enzyme Activity and Nitrogen Supply at Corn Growth Stages. (ASA/SSSA)
- Lacey, C., C. J. Nevins, H. Miller and S. D. Armstrong. 2017. Cover Crop Decomposition and Residue Nitrogen Release Dynamics. (ASA/SSSA)
- Roth, R. T., S. D. Armstrong and M. D. Ruffatti. 2017. A Cost Analysis Approach to Valuing Cover Crop Environmental and Nitrogen Cycling Benefits: A Central Illinois on Farm Case Study. (ASA/SSSA)
- Ruffatti, M. D., S. D. Armstrong, R. Roth and C. Lacey. 2017. Effect of Cover Crops and Nitrogen Application Timing on Nutrient Loading through Subsurface Drainage and Cash Crop Yield. (ASA/SSSA)
- DeSimini, S. and W. G. Johnson. 2017. Evaluation of Herbicide Treatments for Termination of Cereal Rye and Canola as Winter Cover Crops. 2017. (NCWSS)
- DeSimini, S. and W. G. Johnson. 2017. Effects of Failed Cover Crop Termination and Winter Annual Weed Suppression in the Eastern Cornbelt. (NCWSS)
- Johnson, W.G. 2017. Influence of Fall Establishment and Spring Termination Timings of Annual Ryegrass on Corn Yields. (NCWSS)

Research

Ongoing studies by Dr. Eileen Kladvko (kladvko@purdue.edu) and graduate students include:

- Effects of cover crops on soil health. This research is conducted at Purdue Agricultural Centers and on cooperating farmers' fields. Measurements include a variety of commercial soil health tests (PLFA, Cornell, Haney), other soil physical properties, soil

nitrate, cover crop biomass and N uptake, and cash crop yields. Two M.S. students and a post-doc are involved in various aspects of this work. **See posters by Jennifer Woodyard and Nicole Benally (M.S. students).**

Ongoing studies led by Dr. Shalamar Armstrong (sarmstro@purdue.edu) and graduate students

- The influence of cover crop inclusion on soil microbiome diversity and functionality. Experimental factors consist of crop rotation, tillage, and above ground cover crop diversity. On both soil and cover crop residue, measurements of enzymatic activity are being used to indirectly quantify the cycling of carbon and nitrogen with time. Furthermore, selected soil samples are being analyzed for microbial diversity to determine the impact of the treatment on the soil microbiome functionality.
- The synchronization of cover crop N release with the N demand of cash crops. At ACRE in West Lafayette, IN and the Nitrogen Management Research Field Station (NMRFS) in Lexington, IL, cover crop residue decomposition and N release are being measured within multiple crop rotations, (Corn-Corn and Soybean-Corn), and tillage systems (No-till and Spring Till). In addition to monitoring cover crop residue decomposition, we established research methodology to track the fate of fertilizer N using ¹⁵N stable isotope techniques. This methodology will allow us to quantify the interaction of cover crops with fertilizer N, the release of scavenged N from cover crop residue, and the absorption of cover crop N by a subsequent corn crop.
- Optimization of nitrogen management for competitive corn yield following cover crop adoption. Two new research projects have been established in multiple locations across the state of IN (1) investigating the rate of starter fertilizer nitrogen on corn yield following cereal rye adoption and (2) swine manure injection and red clover inclusion rate after wheat impact on nitrogen rate needed for optimum corn yield.
- Impacts of nitrogen application timing and cover crops on crop production and water quality. This research is being conducted at the NMRFS that consists of 15 individually monitored tilled-drained 1.6-acre fields in Lexington, IL. The study analyzes three nutrient loss reduction strategy scenarios (1) moving nitrogen application from fall to spring, (2) moving nitrogen application from fall to spring with the addition of cover crops, and (3) fall applying a dominant portion of the annual N rate into a living stand of cover crops. Tile water flow and velocity are monitored automatically to discern the influence of treatments on discharge.
- The effect of cover crops on surface water quality: A paired watershed experiment in the Lake Bloomington watershed. We are investigating the impact of mass adoption of cover crops on water quality and spring soil nitrogen concentrations. In the Lake Bloomington watershed of Towanda, IL we identified two sub-watersheds, one of 1100 acres and another of 700 acres. Fifty percent of the larger watershed was cover cropped and no cover crops were applied to the 700-acre watershed. Continuous water samples are

collected on a flow-proportional basis at the outlet of each watershed. Water samples are analyzed for nitrate, total phosphorus, and sediments. To determine the impact of cover crops on spring soil inorganic N form and location within the soil profile, spring soil samples are collected and are analyzed for ammonium and nitrate.

Ongoing studies by Dr. Keith Johnson, Dept. of Agronomy (johnsonk@purdue.edu)

- Utilizing cover crops and summer annuals as double cropped forages following wheat . The objective is to determine the suitability and forage quality of ten crop species at varying nitrogen application rates. The crops that are being investigated are; grain amaranth, BMR sorghum sudangrass, pearl millet, teff, foxtail millet, oat, chickling vetch, forage turnip, and oilseed radish.

Ongoing studies by Dr. Lori Hoagland, Dept. of Horticulture (lhoaglan@purdue.edu)

- The long-term goal of Dr. Hoagland's research program is to identify management practices that will improve nutrient-use efficiency, help plants withstand biotic and abiotic stress, and reduce colonization by human pathogens. To this end, she studies how management practices, including cover crops, affect the composition and activity of soil microbial communities. The majority of her research is currently being conducted in intensively managed vegetable production systems, but she has also worked in grain production systems as well. Recent studies have provided evidence that including cover crops and amending soil with compost can increase the diversity and abundance of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi, and thereby help plants withstand drought stress. Soils fertilized with leguminous cover crops are better able to withstand infection by soil-borne plant pathogens, and have lower abundance of potential human pathogens than soils fertilized with urea. Finally, growing certain species and varieties of cover crops increase populations of microbial taxa with biocontrol activity and ameliorate disease incidence in soil infested with long-lived soil-borne plant pathogens.

Ongoing studies by Dr. William Johnson addresses the following 9 topics:

- Evaluation of Herbicide Treatments for Termination of Canola as a Winter Cover Crop. **Stephanie DeSimini, see MCCC poster**
- Influence of Fall Establishment and Spring Termination Timings of Annual Ryegrass on Corn Yields. **see MCCC poster**
- The role of cover crops in the epidemiology of Goss's wilt
- Palmer amaranth control provided by annual ryegrass and cereal rye
- Spring termination of cover crops with herbicides
- The effect of herbicide residues on cover crop establishment.
- New project initiated this past fall - The effect of planting green on corn and soybean yield
- New project initiated this past fall - The effect of a failed cover termination on corn and soybean yield.
- The effect of cover crops on control of herbicide resistant weeds in corn.

Ongoing studies by Dr. Bryan Young, and Dr. Bill Johnson, Dept. of Botany and Plant Pathology (BryanYoung@purdue.edu; WGJ@purdue.edu)

Young--We have two projects with the United Soybean Board that are being conducted collaboratively with the Univ. of WI, Univ. of MO, Univ. of TN, and Univ. of AR.

- Evaluation of herbicides for spring termination of cover crops.
- Evaluation of potential herbicide carryover to fall-seeded cover crops.
 - Johnson--conducts applied research on weed control provided by cover crops, spring termination of cover crops with herbicides, and the effect of herbicide residues on cover crop establishment.

Christian Krupke, Dept. of Entomology (ckrupke@purdue.edu) —Extension work speaking with producers and consultants about the insect pest management challenges associated with cover crops, and how to scout for and manage them.

Some long-term or always ongoing studies continues:

- Cereal rye or other cover crops used in tile drainage research project, where nitrate is measured in tile drainflow. Long-term (25+yrs) but no simultaneous comparison without cover crop. Could make more measurements related to N cycling, if regional collaboration.
- Biomass crops, new and old work (Miscanthus, switchgrass)
- Ongoing work on pest suppression (disease, nematode, weeds) and in vegetable production (Dept. of Botany and Plant Pathology; Dept. of Horticulture)
- Always ongoing work on forages for hay or grazing (Dr. Keith Johnson, Dept. of Agronomy, johnsonk@purdue.edu)

Extension/Education/Outreach/On-farm trials

- Cover crop interest and adoption continues to grow in Indiana. The Indiana Conservation Partnership (NRCS, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), State Soil Board, and Purdue Extension) continues to provide core cover crop training and advanced trainings to conservation field staff, and to host or partner on numerous workshops and field days aimed at farmers. We also work with farmers conducting on-farm trials of cover crops vs. no cover crops and often use those farmers as part of the training cadre for field staff and farmers. Education about soil health is embedded within almost all activities and educational events. Dr. William Johnson of Purdue University (Weed Science) extended knowledge on the subjects of (1) spring residual herbicide and cover crop interaction, (2) spring cover crop termination, (3) reemergence of cover crops in during corn or soybean growing season and (4) seed contamination issues and rape seed mixtures. He also leads the development of a regional extension publication developed that addresses the ability of cover crops to control weeds, insect and crop disease on a regional scale.
(<http://cropprotectionnetwork.org/general-crop-management/cpn-4002-cover-crops-dos-donts/>)