

# MDA Sustainable Agriculture Grant – 2017 Cover Crop Project

## Group Meeting with Farmer Collaborators

February 21, 2017

Truckers Inn, Faribault MN

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Farmers in attendance: Dean Franz, Coty Hyllengren, Nate Kuball, Jim Purfeerst, John Bonde, Lyle Dicke

Others: Brad Frazier CRWP, Lee Thompson CRWP, Alan Kraus CRWP, John Baker Ag Partners Coop

The primary objective of the meeting was to bring about discussion in the group regarding the challenges and successes they experienced in their first year of seeding cover crops into early growth corn. Farmers received information related to the economics of cover crops, web-based planting decision tools, nitrogen leaching reduction capacity of cover crops, and the 2017 requirements of the Sustainable Ag Grant. A spreadsheet detailing the 2016 plantings, costs, observations and results was provided.

The group was very open to sharing their experiences about the 2016 season. Overall they agreed that success could be defined as a thick, well established growth of cover crop present when the corn crop was harvested. The outcomes varied. Factors that limited success included weather events such as heavy rain followed by an extended dry period, herbicide injury, and uneven seed distribution from the broadcast seeding equipment.

The best results were obtained when the cover crop seed was drilled between corn rows. This seeding method was described as undesirable, however, because it consumed too much time. The group discussed the merits of larger seeding drills or more accurate broadcast seeders as much needed equipment for the practice of seeding cover crops into early growth corn to become more feasible.

Additional items discussed were:

- getting yield data from the 2016 harvest, if possible, to help fulfill the grant requirement
- using combine generated data instead of using a weigh wagon next Fall (2017 harvest)
- seeding earlier (V4) creates herbicide issues
- split N application and seeding cover crops must somehow work together

Lastly, it was confirmed that the grant required the participants to seed cover crops into early growth corn for the 2017 cropping season. This effort will help to identify benefits and challenges of this practice for Minnesota corn growers. CRWP expressed appreciation to the collaborating farmers in this project.

## **Agenda**

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Recap of the Grant requirements
  - Acres of Cover Crops
  - Signage
  - Field Days
  - Yield Results
- 3) Recap of 2016 Planting season – Open Discussion
  - Challenges
  - Successes
  - Initial Results
  - Seeding Mixtures
  - Methods
  - Equipment
- 4) Plans for 2017 Cover Crop
- 5) Lunch