

Penn State Extension Holds Spring Cover Crop Field Day
Conservation District Also at Event

Penn State Cooperative Extension (PSCE) in cooperation with Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences' (PSU-CAS) and others held two sets of ten cover crop field day events throughout Pennsylvania. One pair of the field days was held on the R. T. Pecht farm on 290 Center Avenue just outside Beaver Springs. The first local event was on November 20, 2012. Although it rained for part of the day, the second local event was held on April 12, 2013. Several farmers, students and agronomic consultants and salespersons attended.

Coordination for the Snyder County event was between the farmer, Dave Hartman, PSCE Agriculture Educator, Ron Hoover, PSU-CAS Senior Project Associate/On-Farm Research Program Coordinator, and Craig Bingman, Snyder County Conservation District's (SCCD) District Manager.



The April 12 Field Day opened with a walk through the cover crop test plots presented by Dr. Sjord Duiker, PSU-CAS Associate Professor of Soil Management & Applied Soil Physics. Dr. Duiker (wearing a red jacket in the above photo) explained the eight types of cover crop mixes used on this and the other nine demonstration farms throughout the state. He explained benefits and experiences of various cover crop mixtures. Comparisons were made between mixtures on characteristics such as winter survivability, leaf growth and ground cover. He also described results of results from current and prior test plot studies throughout Pennsylvania the past three years.



Above photos show Ron Hoover, showing farmers roots and leaf cover of cover crops during November 20, 2012 field day event at the Pecht Farm.

The Snyder County plots were drilled on September 12, 2012. Cover crop mixes varied from the traditional rye to a mixture of rye and oats to the use of clovers and tillage radishes. Specific mixes used in Snyder County and throughout the state are listed below:

| Mixture # | Species & Seeding Rate (lb./acre) |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 15 lb. "Dixie" crimson clover + 10 lb. "402 KB" annual ryegrass |
| 2 | 15 lb. "Dixie" crimson clover + 84 lb. "718" triticale |
| 3 | 15 lb. "Dixie" crimson clover + 70 lb. "Hercules" grain oat |
| 4 | 10 lb. "402 KB" annual ryegrass + 70 lb. "Hercules" grain oat |
| 5 | 84 lb. "Aroostook" rye + 70 lb. "Hercules" grain oat (Pre-blended mix) |
| 6 | 84 lb. "Huron" rye + 70 lb. "Hercules" grain oat (Pre-blended mix) |
| 7 | 5 lb. tillage radish + [23 lb. hairy vetch + 77 lb. "Aroostook" rye (Pre-blended mix)] |
| 8 | 112 lb. "Aroostook" rye |

Cover crop selection is based on many factors such as planting date, crop rotation, forage usage, tillage system, planned future crop, soil wetness, etc.

For more information about this cover crop demonstration, please contact Dave Hartman, PSCE Agriculture Educator, at dwh2@psu.edu or 800-851-9710.

SCCD Agricultural Conservation Technician Barry Spangler gave a presentation on what farmers need to do to “keep DEP happy.” In other words, Spangler what is required for farmers to be in compliance with the PA Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) agricultural environmental regulations. (For more information, please go to SCCD’s webpages “[Agricultural Erosion Prevention](#)” and “[Agricultural Nutrient Management](#)” for details.)



A manure spreader calibration demonstration (as shown above) was also held during the event with help from host farmer R. T. Pecht, SCCD District Manager Craig Bingman and SCCD Administrative Assistant Renee Swineford. Spangler described the process and went over an example calculation with the attendees.

PSCE, PSU-CAS and Penn State Crop Management Extension Group received a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) from USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to conduct these cover crop field day events.

The Snyder County Conservation District presentation received financial assistance from a Growing Greener grant and a Chesapeake Bay Special Project grant managed through the PA Department of Environmental Protection.

Additional information about the [Snyder County Conservation District](#) programs can be found on our website (www.snyderconservation.org) or by contacting us at 570-837-3000.

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