

Soil Health/Forage Crops/Ag Waste System Tour

Improving soil quality, extending the grazing season, reducing input costs, preventing soil erosion, adding livestock forage, and conserving soil moisture are just a few benefits of growing cover crops. Crop and livestock producers have started to implement cover crops into their management systems as a way to achieve the goals listed above. Interest in cover crops has increased in the last couple of years. In an effort to help area producers become more familiar with cover crops and highlight their potential benefits, the 2nd Annual Forage Beef & Cover Crop Workshop will be held on September 16, 2009.

The workshop is a joint effort by the NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center, the Dunn County, Central Stark, and Western Soil Conservation Districts, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The workshop will be held at the NDSU-DREC Ranch Headquarters near Manning, ND.

Gabe Brown will be speaking on “Integrating Livestock and No Till Cropping Systems Using Cover Crops”. Gabe is a Burleigh County Soil Conservation District Supervisor and has been innovative in the use of no till farming, prescribed grazing systems, and cover crops on his ranch. Other topics to be discussed include: “History and Goals of the Soil Health Demonstration Project”, “Crop Rotation, Diversity, and Nutrient Cycling”, “CIG Grant Results and Future Integrated Beef Research” and “Promoting Post-Dispersal Weed Seed Predation as a Possible Means to Reduce Weed Seed Numbers in Agro-Ecosystems”. In addition to soil health and cover crops, the workshop will also offer a look at the DREC’s newly constructed livestock waste system with a “Tour of the DREC Ag Waste Facility” and a presentation titled “Manure Impacts on Soil Health”.

Cover crops have the potential to increase water infiltration and water holding capacity by increasing soil organic matter, breaking compacted plow pan layers, reduce salinity issues, allow for healthier, higher yielding crops, provide livestock feed and offer enhanced wildlife habitat.

The tour will be on September 16, 2009, and is scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. If you are interested in attending please RSVP to the NRCS Offices in Killdeer at (701) 764-5646 ext. 3 or Dickinson at (701) 225-3811 ext. 3.