

UPPER FOX-WOLF DEMONSTRATION FARM NETWORK

REPORT



Upper Fox-Wolf
Demonstration Farm Network

Protecting Wisconsin's Soil and Water Resources

Year 6 (2024)
Annual Report

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ABOUT THE DEMONSTRATION FARMS



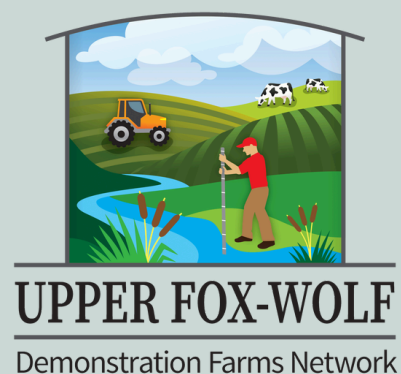
The Upper Fox-Wolf Demonstration Farm Network, a collaboration between U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Waupaca County Land & Water Conservation Department, in partnership with Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Outagamie, Portage, Shawano, and Winnebago counties and the Green Lake Association, was formed in 2018 to test and demonstrate conservation practices to reduce phosphorus, nitrates, and sediment entering the Great Lakes basin. This collaborative effort is funded in part by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), NRCS, County partners, lake associations, and others.

The demonstration farms represent a wide range of farm types, but all have a common goal – to share the knowledge learned on their farms about innovative techniques to improve soil health. These farmers, with technical support from the project management team, voluntarily implement agricultural conservation

practices in their operations. They also host educational field days and share their soil health journeys with other farmers and the public with the goal of helping others implement soil health practices in their operations. In this way, the Network tests and demonstrates the best conservation practices to reduce non-point source pollution entering the Great Lakes basin.

CONTACT OUR TEAM

- **Matt Brugger** (Project Manager)
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FARM SUMMARIES



Jamie Albright

ALBRIGHT BROTHERS, LLC

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

- The farm continues to utilize no-till on many of their acres, recognizing the benefits to soil health.
- In 2024, the farm participated in the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP). Their plot is designed to look at Nitrogen rates when manure and no manure are applied on corn.

Plans for the Future

- They will continue to participate in the NOPP to hopefully better determine nitrogen rates on their fields.



Dan & Ruth Boerst

BOERST FARM

WAUPACA COUNTY

- Dan has embraced many soil health practices on his farm including multi-species cover crops, no-till practices and Regen Acres (planting a season long cover crop).
- Dan continues grazing animals near his home farm.
- In Fall 2024, the farm planted a cover crop plot aimed at looking at the interactions between several species of grass, legume and brassica for the 3rd year.
- Dan grows some cover crop seed and also provides many of his neighbors with seed as well.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue to innovate and try new practices while focusing on soil health, including utilizing unharvested cover crops on fields for a year to provide a break in his rotation.

FARM SUMMARIES



Adam & Kristy Erickson and family

ERICKSON DAIRY FARM

OUTAGAMIE COUNTY

- The farm continues to use their Bazooka Low Disturbance Manure Injection (LDMI) tool bar mounted on a tanker to apply manure.
- In 2024 they updated their corn planter to better handle no-till fields.
- Erickson's hosted Outagamie County Breakfast on The Farm in June 2024.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue to implement cover crops and expand their no-till acres. They also continue to modify their planter to better fit their no-till acres.



Rick & Kimberly Gehrke and family

GEHRKE FAMILY FARM, LLC

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

- The farm continues to plant no-till and plants green whenever possible.
- In 2024, Rick participated in a field monitoring program, looking at a number of factors including soil temperature and soil moisture.
- Data from the weather station with temperature and moisture sensors that was installed on the farm is available through the Network's Facebook page and website.
- Rick continues to establish multi-species cover crops following wheat and rye crops.
- Rick started applying banded fertilizer with his corn planter in 2024.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue to find new ways of integrating cover crops and hopes to find a way to integrate livestock. Rick has recently outfitted his planter for below ground application of nutrients.

FARM SUMMARIES



Matt & Sara Hintz with their son

HINTZ FARM

PORTAGE COUNTY

- The Hintz Farm practices no-till farming with cover crops.
- Matt utilized soil testing and tissue testing on many fields to better track nutrients .
- The farm also utilizes grazing to manage their beef herd that is sold locally.
- Matt planted a soybean plot in 2024 targeting calcium and Boron to see it's impact on yield.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue experimenting with soil health practices to better improve their operation. Matt also continues to lead the Farmers for Tomorrow watershed group.



Ed Montsma

PINEY LAWN ACRES

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

- Ed Montsma has practiced no-till for over 20 years.
- The farm has been utilizing cover crops and for the last four years planted multi-species covers after wheat.
- Ed tried planting his soybeans green in 2024, terminating the covers right after.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue experimenting with covers to improve soil health.

FARM SUMMARIES



Chris Pollack

POLLACK-VU DAIRY, LLC

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

with funding from

GREEN LAKE ASSOCIATION

- The farm has implemented some no-till practices on some of their acres.
- In 2024, the farm participated in the UW Interseeding trials.
- Chris continues to look for opportunities for grazing his steers and in 2024 interseeded corn to provide grazing opportunities in Fall and Spring.
- The farm has also planted corn and soybeans green.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue planting more covers and finding ways to use them to improve their operation. The farm hopes to continue grazing cover crops.



Dave and Dusty Schultz

SCHULTZ LEGACY FARMS

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

- Schultz Legacy Farms practices no-till across all of their acres.
- Over the last few years they have integrated cover crops into their operation.
- Schultz's continue to utilize a self-propelled Hagie modified for cover crop seed they use to do late season interseeding in corn and beans on their acres as well as doing custom work.
- The farm was heavily impacted by slugs in 2024, leading to a meeting with UW Extension and other farmers looking toward increasing study of slug impacts on cash crops.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue implementing more cover crops as well as experimenting with different cover crop mixes. They also plan to plant plots in 2025 to reduce slug populations.

FARM SUMMARIES



Greg & Steve Tauchen

TAUCHEN'S HARMONY VALLEY FARM

SHAWNO COUNTY

- In 2024 Tauchens continue to plant hundreds of acres in rye cover crop, some of which are harvested for feed.
- The farm also interseeded a multispecies cover crop mix on over 70 acres of corn silage, 20 of those acres for the 6th consecutive year. This year the covers were seeded using a drone. On some acres they made a Low Disturbance Manure Injection (LDMI) using a ZML unit.
- The farm also tried applying late season covers using a drone.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue utilizing cover crops to protect their soil and provide feed options. They will also continue to evaluate interseeding as a way of establishing multi species covers and improving soil loss protections.



Zeb & Melanie Zuehls and family

ZUEHLS FARMS

MARQUETTE COUNTY

- The farm has gone to strip-till and no till across its acres.
- In 2024 the farm planned on fencing in some acres for future cover crop grazing.
- Zeb participated in a joint field day with Kevin and Steve Soda discussing how the farm establishes cover crops.
- In 2024 a Wisconet weather station was placed on the farm.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue to integrate cover crops and look for ways to improve soil health. Zeb plans to try integrating cover crop grazing with his beef herd.

FARM SUMMARIES



Eric Lind

LIND FAMILY FARM

WAUSHARA COUNTY

- The farm has implemented no-till practices on most of their acres.
- Eric frost seeded clover into some of his winter wheat in spring 2024.
- The farm also planted a multispecies in a strip of wheat.
- Eric also planted winter peas this fall with the hopes of having them overwinter.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue planting more covers and finding ways to use them to improve their operation.



James "Jim" Luedtke

DREAMHAVEN CATTLE

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

- Jim participated in the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) in 2024, looking at finding the optimal Nitrogen rates for growing corn.
- He is also a founding member and President of the Muddy Bottom Farmers Farmer-Led Watershed Group.
- Jim is working toward updating fences for grazing his beef cattle.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue implementing more cover crops as well as experimenting with different cover crop mixes.

FARM SUMMARIES



Ken, Jeff, and Jacob Strassburg

STRASSBURG CREEK DAIRY

SHAWANO COUNTY

- The farm has experimented with cover crops and planting green over the last few years.
- Strassburg Creek installed a 360 Rain unit in 2024 for applying leachate water to growing crops.
- The farm plants a number of cover crop acres and hopes to use the 360 Rain to help them grow in dry periods.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue planting more covers and finding ways to use them to improve their operation. They also hope to increase the number of acres they can use their 360 Rain Unit on.



Pete Badtke & Family

BADTKE DAIRY LLC

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

with funding from

GREEN LAKE ASSOCIATION

- Over the last few years Pete has integrated no-till and cover crops into his operation.
- In 2024, Pete experimented with drone seeding clover into some of his winter wheat acres.
- Pete also planted some interseeding on a small number of corn acres.
- After wheat, he planted a multi species cover crop mix across most of his wheat acres.
- Pete hosted the Green Lake Association Field Day in August.

Plans for the Future

- The farm plans to continue implementing more cover crops as well as experimenting with different cover crop mixes.

FARM SUMMARIES



Rachel Bouressa

BOURESSA FAMILY FARM

WAUPACA COUNTY

- The farm has been rotationally grazing British White Park cattle since 2015 and direct markets all products from the farm. Currently the farm consists of about 100 acres of perennial pasture.
- Rachel was recently appointed as an agriculture representative for the Natural Resources Board, a founding member of the Central WI Graziers Network, and remains active with several other organizations including Grassworks.
- Bouressa Family Farm is a cutting-edge rotational grazing operation with emphasis on food, human, and environmental health.
- The farm hosts numerous outreach activities and pasture walks each year.

Plans for the Future

- Continue to expand the operation and consumer base. 40 acres of permanent pasture will be added in 2025.
- Adopt innovative technology and practices such as virtual fence livestock collars, and partner with neighboring operations to integrate livestock into the crop rotation.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES



In-Person Outreach

Farmers learn best from other farmers and when the information they receive is locally-based and relevant to them. For this reason, one of our main outreach strategies is in-person field days. Farmers, agency personnel, and county conservation professionals attend in-person days where they are shown local soil health practices our demonstration farmers are using.

Participants can ask questions of demonstration farmers, and can see on-the-ground practices that are working. They may also find practices that aren't working so well, and can explore ways to adapt these practices to work better in their systems.

At a Glance

This year, in conjunction with our county partners and with the support of the demonstration farmers we hosted 6 large field days and 3 field days on the fly. We also partnered with farmer-led groups to assist with field days.

Field Day on the Fly Events

Cover Crop Trial Plot Tour

- Dairy-licious Farm
- April 30 and November 6

Virtual Fence Collars

- Wepner Farms
- November 8

Field Day Events

Farmer Cookout + No-Till Conversation

- With Muddy Bottom Farmers group
- June 10

Farmer Social + Field Day

- With Muddy Bottom Farmers group
- August 7

Green Lake Conservation Field Day

- Pete Badtke
- August 17

Soil Health Field Day

- Shane Kallas & Jamie Albright
- August 27

Interseeded Cover Crops

- Soda Farms LLC
- September 25

Soil Conversations Social Hour

- Farmer Social Potluck - Dairy-licious Farm
- September 4

MUDDY BOTTOM FARMERS GROUP EVENTS

Farmer Cookout + No-Till Conversation June 10, 2024

This year, we partnered with the Muddy Bottom Farmers group, of which Jim Luedtke (one of our new demo farmers) is a part of. The Muddy Bottom Farmers is the first Producer-Led Watershed Group in Winnebago County. This group consists of 30 local producers who are dedicated to improving soil health and water quality while maintaining sustainable and profitable farming operations. They aim to foster a strong community connection between the public and producers.

Their first event this year was a farmer cookout. It focused on bringing area farmers together for fellowship, food, and conversations around no-till practices in the area. About 17 people attended.



Farmer Social + Field Day August 7, 2024

At the second Muddy Bottom Farmer's field day, attendees enjoyed an engaging afternoon filled with soil insights, nitrogen optimization, and farmer fellowship. Jamie Patton provided an in-depth exploration of the fascinating world of soil at the Soil Pit. Experts Lindsay Rushford and Monica Schauer led a session on nitrogen optimization, sharing valuable knowledge and techniques. Derrick Raspor from the demo farm network demonstrated the rainfall simulator, offering participants a hands-on experience to view how soil management practices affect water infiltration and runoff. The event was designed to be both informative and interactive, allowing farmers to gain practical knowledge and network with peers.

This event was co-hosted by the producer-led Muddy Bottom Farmers group, Winnebago County, and Upper Fox-Wolf Demo farms. About 38 people attended this event.



GREEN LAKE CONSERVATION FIELD DAY

August 17, 2024

This family-friendly conservation field day was designed as a day for farmers and community members to come together to learn, share, and experience innovative farming practices that protect Green Lake's land and water.

This event was hosted at one of our newest demo farms (added in 2023), Badtke Dairy LLC. Green Lake Association, Upper Fox-Wolf Demo Farms, and Pete Badtke's joint efforts focus on devising and demonstrating conservation practices that serve the land and significantly reduce phosphorus runoff into the Green Lake watershed. In support of that, this day featured insightful talks on farming practices and how they can influence water quality, land succession planning, drone cover

cropping. Participants got to experience hands-on demos including a soil pit exploration and discussion on heifer grazing benefits both livestock and the land. Attendees also enjoyed visiting farm animals and exploring the "Little Sprouts" area with grow-your-own pollinator garden kits.

Overall, the day highlighted how sustainable farming practices can lead to cleaner water and a healthier environment, emphasizing the importance of supporting local farmers who protect Green Lake. About 80 participants attended this field day.



SOIL HEALTH FIELD DAY

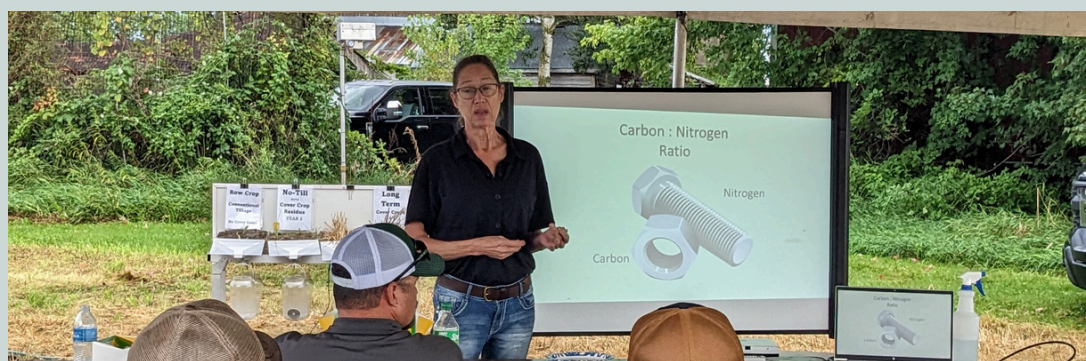
August 27, 2024

For this field day, participants gathered at Shane Kallas's field to learn about cover crops and no-till farming. Shane, a participant in the Winnebago County "Soil Health Challenge" Program, has been using these practices for six years to boost soil health and improve water quality. He shared his experiences, noting better water infiltration and smoother planting compared to conventional fields.

Jamie Patton used a soil pit to share insights on improved soil structure from Shane's practices. Levi Schultz demonstrated the effects of rainfall on different farming systems using the Rainfall Simulator. Monica Schauer updated

attendees on the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Programs (NOPP), and UFW Demo Farmer, Jamie Albright is also part of the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program. Participants learned about research conducted in Jamie's NOPP plot and its impact on soil health. Jamie was on-site for questions and discussion. Matt Brugger represented the Upper Fox-Wolf Demonstration Farm Network, highlighting our conservation efforts.

This field day was co-hosted with the Muddy Bottom Farmers, Winnebago County Land & Water Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. In all, 29 people attended.



INTERSEEDED COVER CROPS

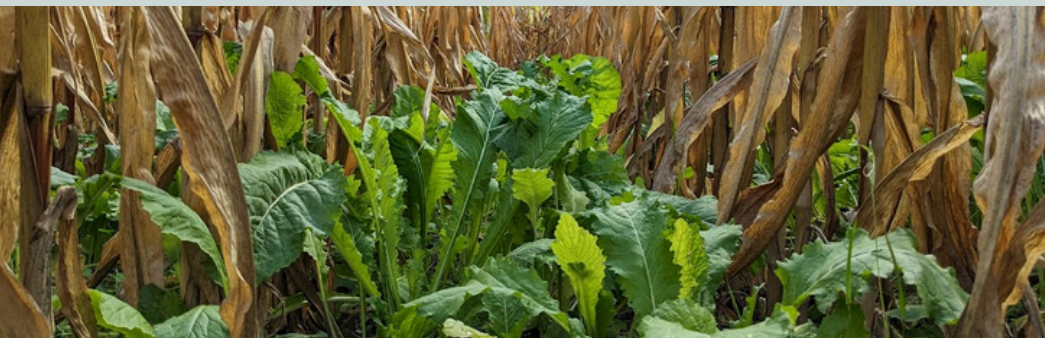
September 25, 2024

This field day was hosted at Soda Farms LLC. Participants explored the benefits of cover crops and no-till farming. The event featured a field tour where attendees viewed plots interseeded with a cover crop mix into corn, comparing its performance across different soil types. They also got to see the interseeder up close.

Farmers Kevin Soda and Zeb Zuehls shared their varying years of experience with no-till farming, and interseeding. Presenters from the University of Wisconsin showed participants a weather station installed on a nearby field that will monitor air and soil temperature, rainfall, soil moisture, evapotranspiration (ET) and more. With readouts from this weather station nearby farmers can have a better handle on current field conditions.

Participants got to see the rainfall simulator in action, demonstrating how rain influences soil movement based on soil management practices applied in that field. In total, about 48 participants attended this field day.

To promote this event, we created a video featuring project manager Matt Brugger discussing the Interseeder, how it works, plus its benefits such as minimal soil disturbance and improved coverage. Kevin Soda also shared his experience using the Interseeder this year to plant a mix of annual ryegrass, clovers, and brassicas. After harvest, we also filmed a video interview with Kevin highlighting how the interseeding didn't affect his yield. This video reached 2,491 people on our Facebook page and 259 people on our YouTube channel.



COVER CROP TRIAL PLOT TOUR

November 6, 2024

This field-day-on-the-fly style event was hosted by Dan Boerst on his farm near Manawa. The topic of the day was Dan's multi-species cover crop trials. The informal event allowed participants to stop by anytime between 10 am and noon to view the plot, discuss cover crop usage, and explore species interactions.

Attendees saw over 20 species of various cover crops including grasses, legumes, and brassicas. Dan discussed his specific cover crop mixes, including fenu creek, winter camellini, crimson clover, and red clover. He highlighted some species' benefits, such as nitrogen-fixing properties and how those can help him reduce inputs.

During the event a segment for "Life on the Farm" was filmed. Project manager Matt Brugger highlighted Upper Fox-Wolf Demo Farm Network and our mission to demonstrate various conservation practices. Dan discussed his cover crop trials and emphasized his goal of improving soil health and increasing organic matter for future generations. Dan mentioned that these trials are part of his ongoing efforts to implement practices and enhance soil health by boosting earthworm populations and organic matter content. About 7 people attended this field-day-on-the-fly.



VIRTUAL FENCE COLLARS + COVER CROP TOUR

November 8, 2024

This field-day-on-the-fly style event was hosted by Jeff and Alex of Wepner Farms, near Manawa in partnership with Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. and Upper Fox-Wolf Demo Farms. The event highlighted the innovative use of GPS-based collars for virtual fencing and the benefits of grazing cover crops. Originally a wheat field, the plot was converted to a cover crop after harvest, with multiple species air-seeded for grazing. The collars, similar to shock collars for dogs, create a virtual fence, allowing remote management of cows. Jeff and Alex explained that they use the collars to move cows

across the cover crop every few days, optimizing grazing patterns. The cow-training process involves using high tensile wire, with cows learning boundaries in about three days by associating the tone with a shock. They also discussed ease of use and potential benefits of the collars, such as pasturing more land and allowing the incorporation of cover crops. The necessity of a good signal and sunlight to power the collars was also discussed.

Participants viewed the cover crop field and the GPS collars on the cows up close. About 32 people attended this field day.



The farmer social hour took place at Dan and Ruth Boerst's renovated event barn.

SOIL CONVERSATIONS SOCIAL HOUR

EVENING DISCUSSIONS FOR FARMERS TO CONNECT

DAIRY-LICIOUS FARM

September 4, 2024

Our third Soil Conversations Social Hour was hosted by Dan and Ruth Boerst, near Manawa. This evening provided unstructured discussion and connection opportunities for local farmers. It also served the purpose of helping to boost morale during a uniquely challenging year due to wetter than normal conditions during the early part of the growing season.

Farmers were asked to bring any topics to the table they'd like. We also let attendees know that we were simply creating a space for farmers to connect, vent, communicate, and potentially problem solve. The evening was co-hosted with Waupaca Forage Council and saw farmers, along with their families, enjoy time together while still allowing for meaningful discussions about the growing season and its challenges.



Farmer Social Potluck

For the second year in a row we've had some unique challenges in agriculture. Bring the family and join us for an evening of unstructured conversation and socializing with your fellow farmers.

Wednesday, September 4th - 5:30 pm-?

- Bring a dish to pass
- Chicken and beverages will be provided

Hidden Treasures Barn
E5947 Bear Lake Rd, New London, WI 54961

Please RSVP for our food count by Friday, Aug. 30

Go.Wisc.Edu/2024Social
or Call Matt Brugger: 920-470-3889



& Dan Boerst in Partnership
with Waupaca Forage Council



DIGITAL OUTREACH



Digital Outreach

This year we continued to utilize and expand our digital outreach. Aside from in-person events, our main outreach tactics have been to create digital materials that are available online for farmers to access at their convenience. This has included educational Facebook posts and videos around soil health topics. We share these videos via our Facebook page and YouTube channel.

This year we focused on a video series, "Fielding Questions." In this series, our soil health professionals interviewed farmers using questions we developed with our Video Pre-Production Planning Sheet (see next page). The goal was to facilitate peer-to-peer learning by helping farmers tell their stories.

Digital Outreach at a Glance

Educational Materials Created:

- Facebook posts
 - Our materials
 - >12 posts
 - Sharing Others' Materials
 - 15 posts

Event Promotion, Thank You's, and Photos

- 21 posts

Communication Platforms Utilized

- EZ Text - contact list grew by 28 this year
- Google Forms
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube

Video thumbnails from our "Fielding Questions" series show how we're applying the concepts of peer-to-peer learning to our digital outreach. At a glance, farmers can see that in each video they can learn from another farmer via the image, accompanying description, and included farm name.



SOCIAL SCIENCE DRIVEN OUTREACH

Social Science in Our Outreach

Outreach strategies are tied to behavior change; done intentionally, they can drive soil health-supporting behaviors, but done carelessly, they can reinforce destructive soil management practices and social norms. For this reason, our outreach specialist and natural resources educator, Maranda Miller, integrates social science, visual media, and environmental education to promote soil health practices. Using social science strategies, she identifies the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for behavior change and applies them to our Demonstration Farm Network outreach to promote the adoption of soil health practices among farmers. Our strategies evolve as we build capacity and understanding, with Maranda focusing on these key areas this year:



Outreach Specialist, and Natural Resources Educator, Maranda Miller filming a field day.

Social Norms

Social norms are behaviors considered normal or acceptable within a social group. Descriptive norms describe what most people do, while injunctive norms are the perceived rules about approved or disapproved behaviors (Isaac, 2019). Social norms influence behavior, affecting the adoption or resistance of soil health practices.

We apply this to the demonstration farms' visuals:

Highlight Positive Descriptive Norms: Show many farmers adopting conservation practices, creating an environment where conservation is seen as normal and approved.

Avoid Negative Descriptive Norms: Avoid suggesting harmful practices are widespread by not showing images of degraded farmland, which could imply these issues are common and acceptable.

Peer-to-Peer Learning

Peer-to-peer learning involves collaborative knowledge sharing and exchanging insights among peers. It's crucial in agriculture as farmers often rely on other farmers for information and ideas (Oreszczyn et al., 2010; Rogers, 2003). Peer-to-peer learning supports the adoption of new practices by leveraging the practical, experiential knowledge of farmers.

We apply this to the demonstration farms' visuals:

Highlight Farmers as Information Sources: Farmers share their experiences directly through facilitated interviews with our agronomists.

Video Thumbnails Feature Farmers: Thumbnails include the farmer's name and farm, ensuring viewers know they're learning from peers.

Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model describes how attitudes towards technology are shaped by perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1986; James and Bewsell, 2023). If technology is seen as useful and easy to use, adoption rates increase, supporting soil health practices.

We apply this to the demonstration farms' visuals:

Highlight Ease of Use and Usefulness: Emphasize the benefits of soil health practices and ease of use through how-to's, describing machinery, and providing additional resources.

Cultivate Understanding with Visual Media: Tailor visuals to fill knowledge gaps, considering the target audience's existing knowledge and needs.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

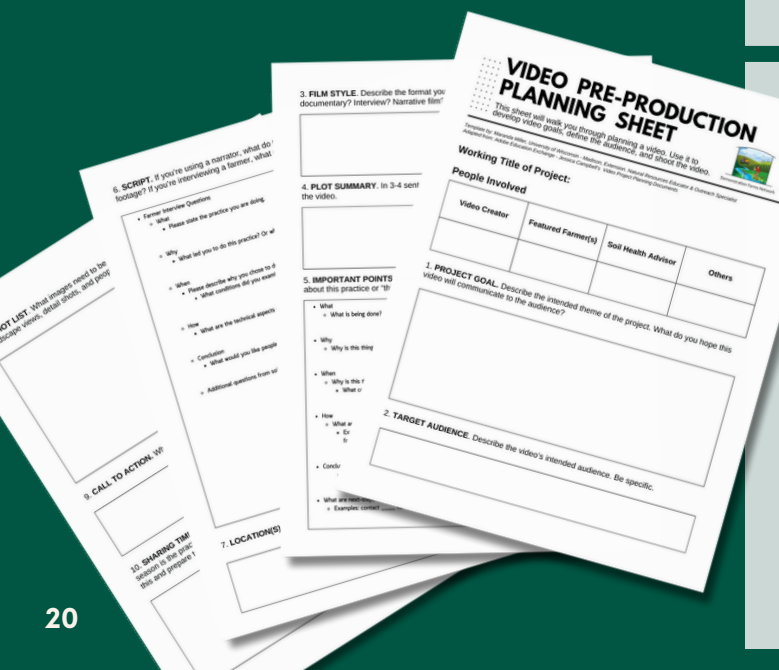
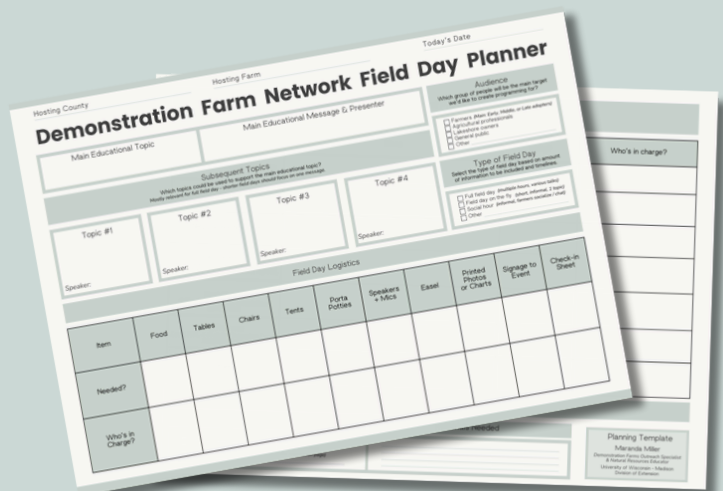
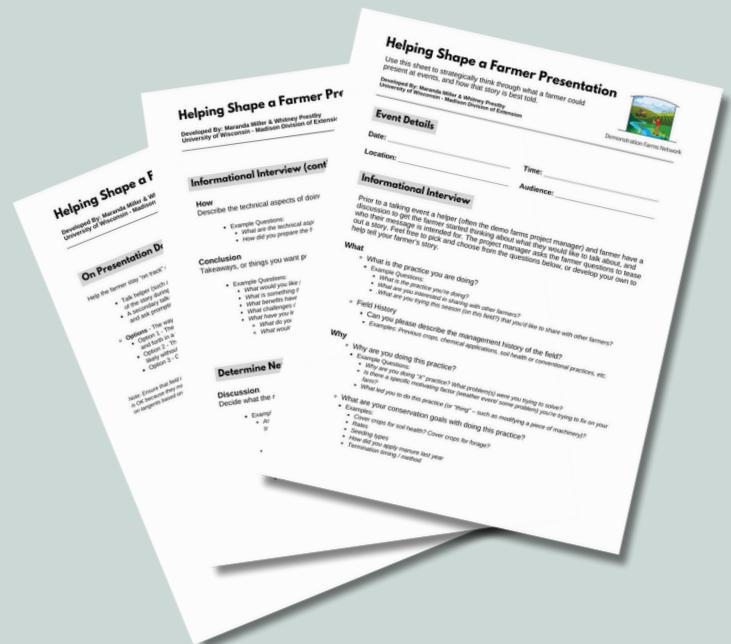
Communication Tools

The demonstration farm networks aim to accelerate and encourage the adoption of sustainable farming practices across northeastern Wisconsin. Effective outreach is crucial to support this goal, as it bridges the gap between information and action. The purpose of outreach is to educate, engage, and empower farmers to implement these practices.

To achieve effective outreach, it is essential to understand the target audience, set clear goals, and use a structured approach to planning and execution. However, this can be challenging for anyone not trained in communication and outreach strategies.

To help with this, Maranda developed three guiding documents: the Demo Farm Field Day Planner, Shaping a Farmer Presentation, and Video Pre-Production Planning Sheet. These documents provide a structured approach for project teams to plan and execute outreach efforts effectively.

This year, we used these documents to plan field days, assist farmer presenters in telling their stories succinctly, and conduct video interviews to capture farmers' messages for their peers. These resources are available to anyone interested in them and we will continue to adapt them as we learn more.



Shaping a Farmer Presentation (top) - a guide to help project partners assist farmers in creating effective and educational presentations, ensuring clear messaging and audience engagement.

Demo Farm Field Day Planner (middle) - a guide to help project partners organize and execute successful field days, ensuring well-organized and engaging events.

Video Pre-Production Planning Sheet (bottom) - a guide to help project partners plan and create video content that effectively draws out and communicates educational messages from a farmer's experience.

ART + SCIENCE COLLABORATION

BRINGING THE DEMO FARMS' WORK TO THE PUBLIC

Healthy Soil: A Sustainable Agriculture Series

The demo farm's work reached new public audiences via a partnership with UW student artist, Megan Strautman and Demo Farm's outreach specialist, Maranda Miller. The pieces created depict important aspects of sustainable farming in Wisconsin. Megan used acrylic paints on canvases. This collaborative project works to depict and bring awareness to sustainable agricultural practices to improve soil and water quality on farms in Wisconsin.

Megan's work was displayed at UW-Madison's School of Education Gallery summer 2024, was presented at the Water@UW-Madison's virtual Spring Symposium, and is available for viewing at Water@UW-Madison's website. Megan's full artist statement describing the pieces can be found at: [Water.wisc.edu/the-flow-project/cohort-2024](https://water.wisc.edu/the-flow-project/cohort-2024)



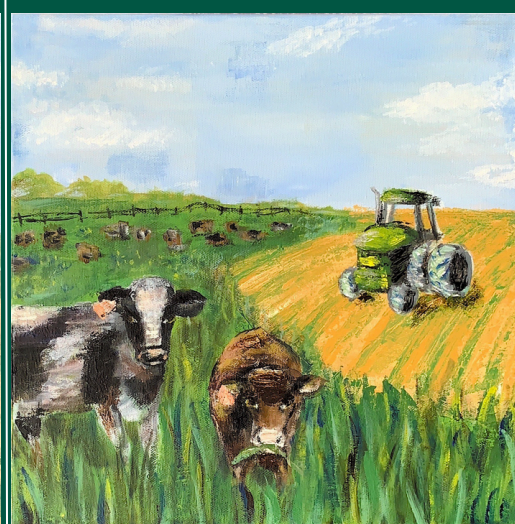
In The Soil

"The first painting shows a cross-section of diverse vegetation, rich soil, the groundwater below, and a nearby stream. Diversity in plant life helps maintain soil health in farm fields. Water can be seen traveling through the soil and roots, making its way to the groundwater below and into the stream. Farming practices that contribute to water quality as well as plant health are essential."



Communication

"The second painting shows three people in a growing farm field. When farmers and nonfarmers share sustainable farming practices, it becomes just as important as implementing these practices. Communication and outreach are important in helping farmers take care of their crops, soil, and water quality. Outreach and communication efforts are seen throughout demo farms in Wisconsin."



On the Farm

"The third painting shows cows grazing in a pasture beside a farm field with a tractor. Through grazing techniques, livestock can revitalize nutrients in the soil below them, creating a cycle of nutrients through the plants and livestock. Farming techniques like covering the soil in non-growing seasons with crop residue and no-till farming allow for better soil quality and health on the farm."

Student Artist

"I am studying art and geosciences. I focus on two-dimensional mediums such as charcoals and pastels, with a love for impressionistic and realistic art styles. I aspire to connect my passions for geosciences and the environment in my art."

-Megan Strautman



Water Partner

"Art is a powerful interpreter of abstract concepts, such as how water quality can be influenced by how we manage the soil. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with Megan, to bring the positive message of the demo farms to the public."

-Maranda Miller



2024 Farmer Roundtable

This year we continued to build upon our partnership with the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance (FWWA). We co-hosted the 2024 Farmer Roundtable event with FWWA, which had about 84 registrants. Matt, Derrick, and Maranda offered session expertise, outreach and event survey assistance, day-of logistics management, and session facilitation. The main topic was Maximizing Water Quality with Soil Health.

The event featured a number of our demonstration farmers as well as their planter setups. Additional topics included cover crop management in extreme weather conditions,

soil health practices impact on water quality, equipment set-up and other considerations for no-till, and where to find/who to contact for farmer resources. Planning is underway for the 2025 Farmer Roundtable event. Many members of the UFW team are involved in these planning meetings, as in past years.

Join us
for the 2024

**WINNEBAGO WATERWAYS
FARMER ROUNDTABLE**



Where: Masticola's
on Broadway
Berlin, WI

When: February 15,
2024

Time: 10am-4pm

Featuring Keynote Speakers
**Amber Radatz and
John Koepke**

John is a local farmer specializing
in soil health, and Amber with
Discovery Farms

Topic: Maximizing Water Quality
with Soil Health

- **Farmer Led Panel**
- **Lightning Discussions**
 - Managing soil health in a
challenging weather year
 - Success with cover crops in
vegetable and grain
operations
 - Cost share opportunities
 - The Farm Progress Report
 - Soil Health Testing
 - Equipment and demos for
soil health systems
- **Farmer Networking**
 - Cocktail Hour
 - Lunch Provided

Registration Fee
\$10 Farmer and
Landowner
\$50 Conservation
Professional and
Community Member

CONTACT TIM AT TIM@FWWA.ORG TO LEARN MORE
or visit our website
WWW.SOILHEALTHINPROGRESS.ORG






Breakfast on the Farm At Erikson's Dairy



This year, the Outagamie County Breakfast on the Farm event, in celebration of June Dairy Month was hosted at our demonstration farm; Erickson's Dairy. Erickson's have been part of the demonstration farm network since 2019 and continue to adopt conservation practices and new technology to support soil health and improve water quality.

Breakfast on the Farm events are a family-friendly day on the farm featuring breakfast, family activities, and sharing information about farming with the public. Project manager Matt tabled the event to share conservation practices that can work on farms, plus Upper Fox-Wolf Demo Farm's mission of testing and demonstrating the best conservation practices to reduce phosphorus and sediment entering the Great Lakes basin.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Wisconet Involvement

The Wisconsin Environmental Mesonet (Wisconet), is an expanding network of weather and soil monitoring stations across Wisconsin, aimed at providing high-quality, real-time data. The network plans to install at least one station in each of the state's 72 counties. These stations, which take over a dozen measurements every five minutes, are hosted by several demonstration farmers as well as



other local farms. The data collected, including air and soil temperature, rainfall, soil moisture, and evapotranspiration rates, helps farmers make informed decisions about crop management. This localized information fills gaps left by traditional weather data sources, such as nearby airports, and enhances the ability of farmers to monitor and respond to field conditions effectively. By leveraging this detailed and timely data, farmers can optimize irrigation, improve crop yields, and contribute to more sustainable agricultural practices. The initiative also aims to foster a collaborative environment where farmers can share insights and strategies based on the data, ultimately benefiting the broader agricultural community. This program will extend to additional demonstration farms in the following years.



Endangered Species Act Farm Tours

Our demonstration farm network's teams took part in a tour and discussions with EPA, US Fish & Wildlife and NRCS at Greendale Farms. The focus was on how the Endangered Species Act may impact farmers and the role conservation practices could play in the future of agriculture. We were grateful for the opportunity to discuss these issues with our fellow participants and thank the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) and Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) for putting the tour together.

Project Partners



Partner Contacts

Person	Role	Phone	Email
Greg Baneck	Outagamie County Conservationist	920-832-5074	greg.baneck@outagamie.org
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Stephanie Prellwitz	Green Lake Association Chief Executive Officer	920-294-6480	stephanie@greenlakeassociation.org

Report Credits

- Report Created by - Maranda Miller
- Farm Summaries Written by - Matt Brugger & Derrick Raspor
- Cover Image - Dan Hagenow Video Creation
- About Us Page Image - Matt Brugger
- Farm Summary Images by - Dan Hagenow Video Creation, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, Country Visions Cooperative, USDA NRCS, Demo Network farmers and their families
- Muddy Bottom Farmer Group Images - Emily Dufek and Sheila Smith
- Green Lake Conservation Day Images - Green Lake Association
- Soil Conversations Social Hour - Inside Barn Photos - Matt Brugger
- All Other Field Day and Outreach Activities Images - Maranda Miller
- Endangered Species Tour Photos - National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants

Social Science Sources

- Isaac, Sara. "Did This TV Ad Encourage Littering? How Norms Campaigns Can Go Wrong." LinkedIn.Com, 4 Oct. 2019, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/did-tv-ad-encourage-littering-how-norms-campaigns-can-sara-isaac>
- Oreszczyn, Sue, et al. "The role of networks of practice and webs of influencers on farmers' engagement with and learning about agricultural innovations." *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 26, no. 4, Oct. 2010, pp. 404-417, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2010.03.003>.
- Rogers, E M. "Diffusion of Innovations." The Free Press, 2003.
- Davis, Fred D. "A Technology Acceptance Model for Empirically Testing New End-User Information Systems: Theory and Results." Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1986.
- "What Is the Technology Acceptance Model?" Performance by John James, and Denise Bewsell, Youtube, 26 June 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-syOWZ_T4sQ. Accessed 2 Aug. 2024.

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025!

UPPER FOX-WOLF DEMONSTRATION FARM NETWORK

Protecting Wisconsin's Soil and Water Resources

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