



# Sheboygan River Sentinel

*The newsletter of Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers*

Summer 2021

[srpfarmers.com](http://srpfarmers.com)



*Members and partners gathered for a field day on April 21.*

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# Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers digs into cover crop termination at field day

*By Steven Schauer for SRPF*

For farmers, committing to planting cover crops is one thing. Figuring out how to do it is another.

That was the focus at a Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers field day on April 21 as participants explored the right seed mix, when to plant and the best time to terminate the crop.

Nearly three dozen farmers heard

from Dan Smith, researcher in the Nutrient and Pest Management Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, along with Tony Peirick, chairman of the Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil – Healthy Waters farmer-led group.

Cover crops have been shown to reduce soil loss and improve nutrient loading capacity. Wisconsin farmers

are implementing these crops more and more, but there is still a lot of trial and error happening in fields. Joe Wagner, president of SRPF, hosted the field day to share more about what to do after crimson clover and turnips make it through the winter.

“My big thing was when and what to do with the turnips that made it through the

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winter because I wasn't expecting that," Wagner said. "I planted a multispecies cover crop last fall, expecting just the crimson clover to make it and I didn't know what effect the turnips would have on my corn. What was talked about today gave me great insight as to when I am going to terminate the turnips."

Turnips are used as cover crops because they are inexpensive and grow quickly, which helps them scavenge high amounts of nitrogen. Turnips also decompose to suppress weeds until the spring.

"It is essential to try these species on your farm so you get to know how to manage them, how they are going to grow on your farm and what they are going to look like," Smith said. "This is a great test case — a great example

of sometimes what can unexpectedly happen when you grow a cover crop, but certainly not a bad thing either. This is something that is easily managed with termination techniques and very easy to plant into as well."

As farmers learn the benefits of cover crops and the biomass they create below the surface, they begin to understand the advantages of reduced tillage and even no-till practices. Peirick has been no-tilling for over a decade and has gone a step further by not using any synthetic fertilizer on his farm.

"It's going to take farmer-to-farmer contact and talking, along with field days, to show farmers they can do it," Peirick said about implementing more cover crops. "They are just afraid to do it and everybody is set in their ways.

By understanding the soil, and what living soil is, and by introducing these chemicals, you are killing so much of the biology."

Peirick has learned over the years that fertilizer and chemicals aren't the answer on his farm. He hasn't sprayed either on his crops in years and now plants solely into green.

"I don't think we'll ever learn everything we need to know about the soil," Peirick said. "It's an exciting time in agriculture coming up because regeneration and growing cover crops will get your soil back to where it is supposed to be. It will also help the farmer's bottom line." 🏡



# Remember to try cover crops

By Joe Wagner, SRPF president



Hello again,

Just a few things to keep in mind as we start with wheat harvest. Now is a good time to get some cover crops in the ground. If you haven't already, try planting a multi-species cover crop and see how that might benefit your soils or next year's crop.

Remember that we do have cost sharing for this and other conservation practices (see Page 4 for more information on our 2021 program). Make sure to check our website for program changes and the form to sign up. Cost-share enrollment is due Nov. 15. Have a nice rest of summer! 🏡

# SRPF awards academic scholarships

Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers has awarded three scholarships to local students.

Brianna Breunig, Ashton Haack and Alisha Klemme will each receive \$500 to continue their education in an agriculture-related or environmental science degree.



Breunig, the daughter of Mark and Mary Breunig of Sheboygan Falls is a 2019 graduate of Oostburg High School and is attending the

University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She is majoring in animal science with an emphasis in animal companionship. Her minor is chemistry.

"I am honored to receive this scholarship and know that the SRPF is supporting the future of farming in Sheboygan County," Breunig said. "As I learn more about conservation, I've become increasingly aware of the importance of sustainable practices in my fields of study. SRPF has given me the opportunity to acquire knowledge and share new ideas with the community. As the demand for agriculture continues to increase, I feel it is important for farmers to utilize new technology and farming practices to do their best to conserve land for future generations."

Breunig was involved in dozens of clubs, activities and community service

events while in high school. She received six 4-H awards and has been on the UWRF Dean's List three times.



Haack, the son of Tom and Heidi Haack of Sheboygan Falls is a recent graduate of Plymouth High School. He will attend the University of

Wisconsin-River Falls in the fall and major in agricultural engineering.

"Receiving this scholarship means a lot to me," Haack said. "I have worked hard all year to receive this and I appreciate the help financially toward my career in agricultural engineering. My career goal in agriculture is to focus on farmer-led conservation efforts. I want to help solve problems concerning pollution and environmental issues. I believe that my connection with SRPF will help me understand the needs of the industry and where I can have the biggest impact on the efficiency of agricultural production systems."

Haack won first place in the Wisconsin State Fair and Sheboygan County Fair in dairy showmanship. He was an Honor Roll student, 11-year member of his 4-H Club and four-time champion archer.

Klemme, the daughter of Scott and Michelle Klemme of Plymouth is a recent graduate of Plymouth High School. She will attend the University of Minnesota in the fall and major in

animal science and minor in business and Spanish.



"Receiving this scholarship means that I will have a way to help with the cost of my college tuition. Thank you, SRPF" Klemme said. "It is

important to be associated with SRPF because they help ensure that farmers are growing crops sustainably and in healthy soil. As someone who raises beef cattle, I use high-quality feed to help grow my animals to their fullest potential. If I do not have the highest quality feed, my animals are not going to grow and I will not be able to provide a product for my family and clients."

Klemme was president of the Willing Workers 4-H Club, a member of the National Honor Society and Future Business Leaders of America, and varsity swimmer and track student athlete. She was involved in nearly two dozen community service projects, including Meals on Wheels.

SRPF offers scholarships to encourage young people to continue their education in agriculture, Joe Wagner, board president, said, "These three students have a bright future ahead of them in agriculture. They see the value and importance of conservation practices and protecting our soil and water." 🏡

# SRPF offers cost-share program for members in 2021

SRPF is proud to offer members cost-share incentives for implementing various conservation practices. The following programs are available to members in 2021:

- **Cover Crops** – 75% of total costs if left until spring, 50% if tilled in the fall. \*\*Bin-run-crop without a receipt you get paid market price\*\* Max of \$40/acre, \$1,500/farm.
- **No-till/Reduced Tillage** – \$20/acre up to 50 acres, increases in second and third year. Max of \$2,500/farm.
- **Planting Green** – Spring planting into a living cover crop. Producers can collect cost share on cover crop in the fall, then collect an extra \$20 for planting green into the cover crop the following spring. Maximum of 50 acres or \$1,000/farm. Not to be combined with no-till or reduced-till program.
- **Split Nitrogen Application** – Producers not currently applying split nitrogen are eligible to enroll in this program once. \$10/acre, max \$1,000/farm.
- **Soil Testing** – For producers who have not soil tested within the past five years/farm, not field. Farm is eligible to enroll in this program once. Up to \$4/acre, max \$1,000/farm.
- **Manure and/or Tissue Testing** – Up to \$200 per farm each.
- **Equipment Upgrades** – Add-on or update to existing equipment. Must be signed up for another cost-share program. 20% of total costs or \$1,500/farm.
- **Crop Diversity ‘growing season cover crop’ Interseeding Program** – May include legume grass, multiple species, beans planted into corn. \$40/acre, max \$1,500/farm.
- **Encapsulated/Stabilizer Nitrogen/Phosphorus Application** – Producers not currently applying encapsulated nitrogen and phosphorus are eligible to enroll in this program once. \$5/acre, max 100 acres, max \$500/farm.

Get the form at [srpfarmers.com/cost-share](http://srpfarmers.com/cost-share). Forms and receipts must be turned in by Nov. 15.

Questions? Contact Joe Wagner: [srpfarmers17@gmail.com](mailto:srpfarmers17@gmail.com) or (920) 838-1102. 📞

## 2021 member survey now open

SRPF requests current and future members take a brief survey to understand what conservation practices are being done on the land.

Through survey results, we demonstrate the effort farmers are making to improve soil health and water quality. The conservation practices implemented by members not only improve water quality, but also improve productivity of farms through increased yields and reduced input costs. These practices can help the land withstand extreme weather events.

The surveys provide a measurement for SRPF to compare efforts from year to year.

The conservation practice survey is a quick and simple way for farmer-led groups to gauge farmer engagement and interest in practices, as well as for our group to share the positive impacts we are making on the environment in our community.

**The deadline to complete the survey is Nov. 15. It is critical that we have 100 percent participation.**

To complete the survey, go to [srpfarmers.com](http://srpfarmers.com).

If you have any questions, contact Jamie Fisher at [jfisher@dairyforward.com](mailto:jfisher@dairyforward.com) or (920) 905-3446. 📞

# Member profile: Clint Hodorff



Second Look Holsteins / Peniel Acres is a 1,000 cow dairy in Fond du Lac County. The farm operates 1,300 acres of small fields with a slope on most of the fields. The soil types run from clay to gravel knobs.

**How has being a member of SPRF helped you accomplish your conservation goals?**

Meeting and talking with other members and professionals that attend SRPF's field days has helped me gather information. From that I look at what could work on our farm and try them to see how those conservation practices turn out for us.

**What was the biggest challenge you faced with implementing a conservation practice?**

The biggest challenge was figuring out where to start with cover crops and what types of cover crops we should use.

**Was there anyone who has helped you along your conservation journey?**

Not one individual, but attending different conferences and listening to numerous presenters has helped me determine what we should do.

**What is your advice to someone who wants to try a new practice but isn't sure where to start?**

Just try something. Pick one cover crop, do a little bit of digging to see what may work for your cropping practices and try it.

**Were there any unanticipated outcomes from any of the practices you've tried?**

One year we had rye that got away from us due to wet weather. We were able to roll the rye and plant into it.

**What surprised you the most after you tried planting into green for the first time?**

After planting green into standing rye, we noticed how well the soybeans and corn grew through the rye and how much weed suppression there was from the rye debris.

**How long have you been implementing conservation practices on your land and why did you start?**

We have been using conservation practices for the past four years and we started to improve the soil that we are farming, retain the nutrients that we are applying to the fields from manure, and help with the erosion.

**How has SPRF helped you understand conservation practices?**

Working with SRPF members allows us to see how others are using conservation practices, and getting some funding to help with the cost of trying new conservation practices has been a great help to move forward.

**Why is it important for you to have a sustainable farm?**

We have the fifth generation joining the farm and we want to preserve the soil and get the most out of every acre that we farm. 🌱



Hodorff hosted a SRPF field day on Oct. 23, 2020 to explore the impact of multi-species cover crops.



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