

# Calumet County Success from the Field

## Forage Council Promotes Soil Health



### Background

For the last seven years, several Calumet County Forage Council board members have been working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These board members have been implementing a whole suite of conservation practices since 2010. The members participate in both the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The forage council board members actions place them at the forefront of conservation and soil health in Calumet County. Members have adopted no-till, cover crops, prescribed grazing, manure storage, feed storage, and nutrient management practices.

### Highlights

In 2017, because of the individual successes they had, the forage council decided to start promoting soil health to all Calumet County producers. Promotions started in late winter, with a full day of presentations by local producers who effectively use cover crops on their farm. These producers discussed their experiences and successes, promoting the soil health practice. Other soil health presentations included the importance of no-till, as it relates to soil health, and the use of low disturbance manure application. Calumet County has many active dairy farms, so manure is always a part of any agriculture conversation.

Late summer brought the perfect time for a field day, where various cover crop seeding equipment was on hand and demonstrated to the over 40 attending producers. Staff from Rio Creek Feed Mill brought their Hagie high clearance sprayer which was modified with a cover crop seeder. Members of the Plum and Kankapot Watershed projects discussed soil health and the different conservation practices they are implementing in those two watersheds, which are located partially in northern Calumet County. They also brought an interseeder, which is used to plant cover crops in standing corn between the V3-V7 stage.

### Future Plans

The Calumet County Forage Council plans to continue to host winter meetings as well as summer field days, partnering with NRCS, to promote soil health and incorporating NRCS conservation programs and technical assistance.



Rio Creek Feed Mill provided a Hagie high clearance sprayer, equipped with a cover crop seeder, for field day participants to view. Producers were able to watch the seeder in action and Rio Creek Feed Mill staff were on hand to answer questions about the seeder.



An interseeder used for cover crops in the Plum and Kankapot watersheds, both partially located in Calumet County, was on hand for field day participants to view.

