

Crawford County Success from the Field

It Takes a Village....



Background

While it takes the passion and commitment of private land-owners and operators to successfully implement conservation practices, it is usually a direct result of the great people working behind the scenes to build trust, showcase the successes and dig in to find the right fix.

Highlights

Dave Troester has been the Crawford County Conservationist since 2011. With a background in natural land management, he jumped into agricultural conservation with both feet. Dave enjoys utilizing conservation education opportunities, like poster and speaking contests and youth conservation days, to educate others about the importance of agriculture. He also regularly invests his time training tomorrow’s land managers on the value of ecology and species management. While tackling the everyday duties of Farmland Preservation Program compliance, manure storage and livestock siting ordinances, zoning and non-metallic mining, he has added county-wide aerial application of cover crops to his task list. Dave built a program that started with an idea and grew into a huge success. In the past five years, Dave’s idea turned into almost 4,000 acres of cover crops aerially applied. Crawford County’s rugged topography leaves a challenge and opportunity to assist farmers in keeping their soil in place. This is a win-win for producers who need good topsoil and residents and visitors that enjoy the county’s scenic beauty and clean rivers and streams. Cover crops have improved soil health and reduced input costs in the area. This helps producers improve their bottom line.

Future Plans

NRCS assists producers through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program in trying out cover crops with little financial risk. Through EQIP, producers recognize the financial and agronomic benefit of soil health practices, like cover crops, and can make long-term management improvements on their operation. Cover crops have both agronomic and financial benefits. Most producers decide to continue implementing the practice after the initial EQIP funding.

Aerial seeding has peaked producers curiosity in the area. One benefit of using low-flying, bright yellow planes to seed cover



Dave pictured at the Ferryville Eagle Watch days.

crops is the discussion it has generated. Sparked conversations enable NRCS to highlight benefits of the cover crop practice to operators, landowners and other partners in the area. NRCS and Crawford County Conservation will continue to promote cover crops with the goal of proving soil health benefits so farmers choose to continue using the practice in the future, even without EQIP cost-share assistance.



Dave conducting a prairie tour.

Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service

