



This newsletter is a joint effort from the following organizations:



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*If you would like to receive this newsletter by email please send a request to:*  
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## Did You Know

### Soil is Full of Living Microorganisms?

By Dean Thomas

Living microorganisms are so small that you need a microscope to see them all. Without microorganisms the soil would simply be made up of sand, silt and clay particles. These microorganisms need actively growing roots to help keep energy up to maintain the health of the soil. Adding cover crops to your management would promote a diversity of living microorganisms because the living root system will supply them with an abundance of energy. Unfortunately it's a challenge to plant cover crop after late harvested crops, but where crops are harvested early such as canning crops and corn silage, cover crops can readily fit in.

What is a cover crop you may ask? Cover crops are the plants that are grown to suppress weeds, help build organic matter and improve soil infiltration, control diseases and pests, and they can be a feed source for livestock producers. But one thing that is unseen to the naked eye, is the activity that these cover crop roots do to the soil beneath the surface. The cover crop roots system are feeding the microorganisms when there is no crop growing. In return, you not only get the benefits listed above, but you are benefiting the living microorganisms below to provide a better crop the following growing season.

The soils on your farm cannot be taken for granted, it's the only soil your field will get, why not keep it there for the next generation to use so they can produce healthy crops on it? Protection from water and wind erosion has been a battle we have been dealing with for decades. One thing we can all agree on is that by keeping the soil cover all year, it will help protect it from the elements that mother-nature gives us. As Hugh Bennett said "If we are bold in our thinking, courageous in accepting new ideas, and willing to work with instead of against our land, we shall find in conservation farming an avenue to the greatest food production the world has ever known – not only for the war, but for the peace that is to follow."

If you any questions contact Dean Thomas at 507-765-3878 ext. 128 or email dean.thomas@fillmoreswcd.org

## Rotational Grazing Field Day July 9th @ 2:30 pm

This event will be hosted at the Richard Stadheim Pasture, 2 miles north of the I-90 and I-35 interchange on Highway 13, at 74985 240th Street, Albert Lea MN.

### Family events include:

2:30 pm Guest Speakers  
 “Using Warm Season Native Grasses”  
 “Fencing & Watering Systems”  
 “Managing Your Grazing Systems”

4:00 pm Greg Wood, Keynote Speaker  
*National Cattlemen’s Beef Association*  
*Environmental Stewardship Award Winner*  
 “Staying Focused on Forage & Cattle”

5:00 pm Supper served

5:30 pm Tours of the new 80 acre  
 Cattle Pasture



Youth Fitting Clinic

This event is hosted by Richard & Sarah Stadheim along with County Road Cattle. More information available at:  
[www.CountyRoadCattle.com](http://www.CountyRoadCattle.com)

Also, find County Road Cattle on Facebook!

## UPCOMING EVENT:

December 13-December 16, 2015

### 6th National Conference on Grazing Lands

Online registration is now live for conference attendees, speakers, exhibitors and sponsors can register for the conference here:

<http://www.cvent.com/d/brqsxm>



## Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship because our farms need good people

By: Bridget O'Meara, Communications Coordinator

We all know that good help can be hard to find. As busy dairy farmers, we often rely on proximity—and luck—when it comes to hiring employees. While the kid down the road might be just the right person for the job, sometimes you need to cast a broader net and take your chances. Even if you are lucky enough to find someone with drive and initiative, it isn't easy to develop a quality employee on your own. Quality is important. If you are looking to improve or expand your operation or even just take a vacation, you need someone you can trust.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) is here to help. DGA assists grazing dairy farmers in finding, training, and retaining good people who can make a difference on their farms and improve their quality of life. DGA is a National Apprenticeship that provides a comprehensive support for the transfer of knowledge and skills required to develop top-notch employees. The program consists of 4000 hours over two years. Of these hours, 3722 are guided on-farm training in all aspects of running a managed grazing dairy operation, while the other 288 are related instruction. The related instruction includes formal coursework, pasture walks, and discussion groups to enhance on-farm learning and facilitate networking.

Our farms need good people, today and for the future. Find out more about what Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship can do for you at [www.dairygrazingapprenticeship.org](http://www.dairygrazingapprenticeship.org) or contact DGA's Minnesota Education Coordinator at [bonnie@grazinggrazingapprenticeship.org](mailto:bonnie@grazinggrazingapprenticeship.org) or 507-421-7170



# CROPLAND CONVERSION AND FERTILITY MANAGEMENT PASTURE WALK

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 13 1:00 – 3:00 PM**

## HOSTS:

TOM AND SUE HUNTER

23257 685th St

Wabasha, MN

Email: [hunter.ts@gmail.com](mailto:hunter.ts@gmail.com)

## FARM DESCRIPTION:

Tom and Sue purchased the farm and converted the cropland to pastureland in 2010. They installed fences and a watering system with assistance from NRCS and graze beef cattle and sheep. They use temporary fence to subdivide the pasture into management units, moving the animals as many as two times per day. They winter the cattle on pasture and use feeding areas to improve soil fertility and organic matter.

## ACTIVITIES:

We will walk out to a location where Tom has done soil testing and applied Gypsum in 2014 to half of a pasture seeding. We will measure soil compaction in the treated and untreated areas with a penetrometer, complete pasture condition score evaluations, and clip to determine standing forage mass in the treated and untreated areas. Tom will discuss his fencing and watering systems and the use of temporary fence to create paddocks.

Then we'll walk to an area where the cattle were outwintered and examine the use of cover crops and an untreated check plot in those areas. Following this, general discussion will be encouraged.

## DIRECTIONS:

From Wabasha take US Highway 61 to County Highway 10. Turn left (to the west) on Highway 10 and go 4.9 miles to County Highway 20. Turn left on 20 and go 1 mile to 685<sup>th</sup> St. Turn left and go to the end of the driveway. Signs that say **Grazing Workshop** with an arrow will be posted at County Highway 20 and at 685<sup>th</sup> Street.

## SPONSOR:

**Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association**

<http://www.mnglca.org/>



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625 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW Cresco, IA

563-547-2492

[www.fiskfarmandhome.com](http://www.fiskfarmandhome.com)

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