



2007 Year in Review



The first ILF field day of 2007 was held at the Joel and Linda Zwiefel farm, rural Fenton. Joel dug a root pit for attendees to see his soil after six years of strip-tilled corn-on-corn rotation.

This past year was successful for the Iowa Learning Farm. We have seen much growth within the project, and increased project awareness statewide. With a full staff in place beginning in May, outreach to the citizens of Iowa has increased dramatically. The rainfall simulator was our most popular educational tool, with appearances all over Iowa in Summer 2007, and there are already 15 rainfall simulator appearances scheduled in 2008, beginning in April.

Our cooperators are taking ownership of this project. They are playing a key role in collecting agronomic and water quality information on their lands and are seen as knowledgeable resources by their neighbors and peers. We look toward 2008 with anticipation as our outreach grows to include ILF Conservationists—spokespeople who will help deliver the message about the importance of conservation to all Iowans.

Our partner agencies were instrumental in helping build a Culture of Conservation. The stakeholder event held in late August was a success, fueling agency enthusiasm as well as engaging new commodity, water quality and conservation groups. Our new video debuted as part of Paul Lasley's presentation during the Conservation Districts of Iowa annual Soil and Water Commissioners conference in late November.

With the work plan for 2008 in front of us, we roll up our sleeves to meet—and exceed—our goals for the year ahead.

—Jerry DeWitt
project manager



The rainfall simulator's first appearance for 2007 was in May at the Childrens Water Festival at DMACC, Ankeny. Matt Helmers discusses outcomes with one of the 3,000 fifth graders from across Iowa who attended.

Iowa Learning Farm 2007 Outreach Summary

Outreach	2007	Goals 2008	
		(attendance)	
ILF Sponsored Field Days	7*	257	10
ILF Rainfall Simulator Engagements	36	3,373	40
Displays	4		8
Presentations	15	850+	20
Newsletters	3		4
ILF articles in <i>Wallaces Farmer</i>	1^		12
Videos	1		5
Farmer Cooperators	28		30
ILF Conservationists (spokespeople)	10†		25

* The stakeholder event is included in this tally. ILF team members were also involved in other field days including two ISU Research Farms (not included in the total).

^ Additional media coverage includes story on Rainfall Simulator on WHO-TV 13, an editorial in *Des Moines Register*, featured hour on "Talk of Iowa" radio program, various radio interviews and local newspaper articles throughout the year.

† The 10 ILF Conservationists were named in 2007 and will begin presentations and programs in 2008.

In 2007, ILF sponsored or presented at events in 33 of the 99 counties. It is our goal to be present in at least 50 counties in 2008. With the help of the ILF Conservationists, this goal will be reached.



Jackie Comito talks with attendees at the Iowa Farm Bureau annual meeting in December. The ILF display was at several meetings and conferences in 2007.



ILF Conservationist Steve Berger, left, shows soil samples from tilled and no-till fields at the Rob Stout Field Day in August. It is the goal of the ILF to impact more farmers with similar presentations.





Field Days

ILF hosted six field days between June and August at locations across Iowa: Palo Alto, Muscatine, Washington, Adair, Ringgold, and Clay Counties. To promote these events, news releases were sent to local papers and radio stations. Postcards were created and sent to the hosts for personal invitations. In some cases flyers were made for ISU Extension offices to distribute and display.

Each field day concentrated on a specific agricultural issue such as no-tillage, corn on corn rotation, cover crops, CRP contracts, wildlife food plots, water quality, soybeans and pest management to name a few. The rainfall simulator was demonstrated at each site (weather permitting).

Following each field day, surveys were sent to all registrants inquiring about their farming practices. Over 61% of the respondents said they would consider adopting high-surface residue crop management on some of their acres in 2008; and 51% commented that they would network conservation ideas with other farmers.

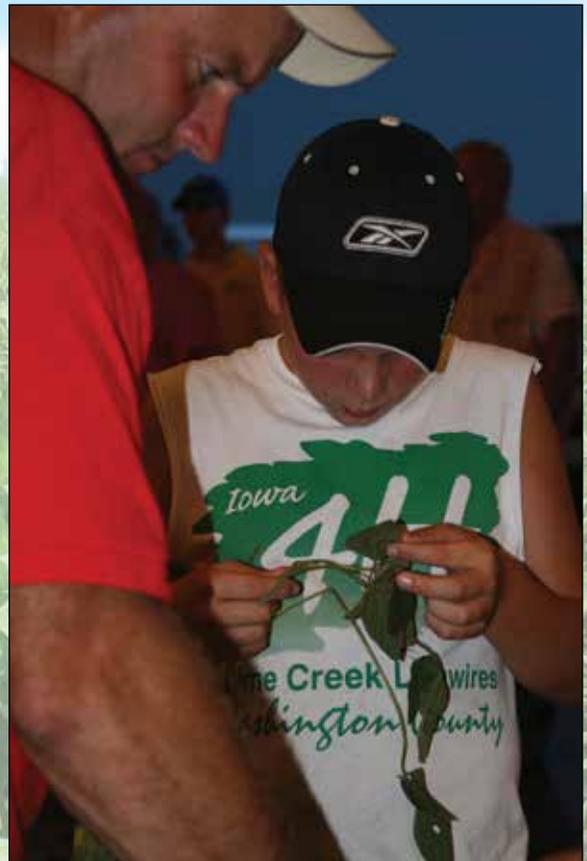
In early 2008, these people were surveyed again to find if they are committed to these changes. These responses are still being gathered.



Jerry Crew Field Day, Clay County



Randy Caviness Field Day, Adair County



Rob Stout Field Day, Washington County

Learning Farm flourishes

By CAROL BROWN
Iowa Learning Farm is expanding its reach to other states, with a focus on the Midwest. The program, which began in 2005, is now in its second year. The program is designed to help farmers improve their production practices and profitability. The program is based on the Iowa Learning Farm model, which focuses on conservation, profitability, and sustainability. The program is currently in its second year, and is expected to continue for several more years. The program is a partnership between Iowa State University and the Iowa Learning Farm. The program is designed to help farmers improve their production practices and profitability. The program is based on the Iowa Learning Farm model, which focuses on conservation, profitability, and sustainability. The program is currently in its second year, and is expected to continue for several more years. The program is a partnership between Iowa State University and the Iowa Learning Farm.



Key Points
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AGENTS OF CHANGE

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Bonus for carbon

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Plan your corn refuge

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PLANT THE BIG 3 FOR A BIGGER '08.

For Minnesota and northern Iowa soybean growers, 2008 spells opportunity. With all the moisture in the ground from this year's rains, it could be a great crop year with a couple of big "Big 3" if your beans can resist Iron Chlorosis and if they can resist Soybean Cyst Nematode. As you plan for 2008, consider L2038R, L2055R and L2155R from Latham Seeds. Latham agronomists call these breakthroughs the "Big 3" due to their top yields and outstanding pest resistance.

Latham



Doug Campbell



Frank Moore



Joel and Linda Zwiemel



Paul Hunter

An article from the Iowa Learning Farm will be published in each issue of Wallace Farmer in 2008. The first article, appeared in the Dec. 2007 issue and presented an overview of the project.



The new ILF Conservationists include (l to r): Dave Ruden, Bill Hammitt, Mark Ingwersen, Steve Berger, Jon Gisleson, and Norm Lust. Not pictured are Jody Kerns, Laura Krouse, Barry Kusel, and Dave Van Waus.



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Brad Bond, left, ISU senior Ag Engineering major, spent the summer taking the rainfall simulator to events across the state, including the Des Moines Farmers Market in July.