



IOWA LEARNING FARMS  
**FIELD DAY**  
**TOOLKIT**



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## **ABOUT IOWA LEARNING FARMS**

Established in 2004, Iowa Learning Farms (ILF) is building a Culture of Conservation by encouraging adoption of conservation practices. Farmers, researchers and team members are working together to identify and implement the best management practices that improve water quality and soil health while remaining profitable. Partners of Iowa Learning Farms include the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (USEPA Section 319).

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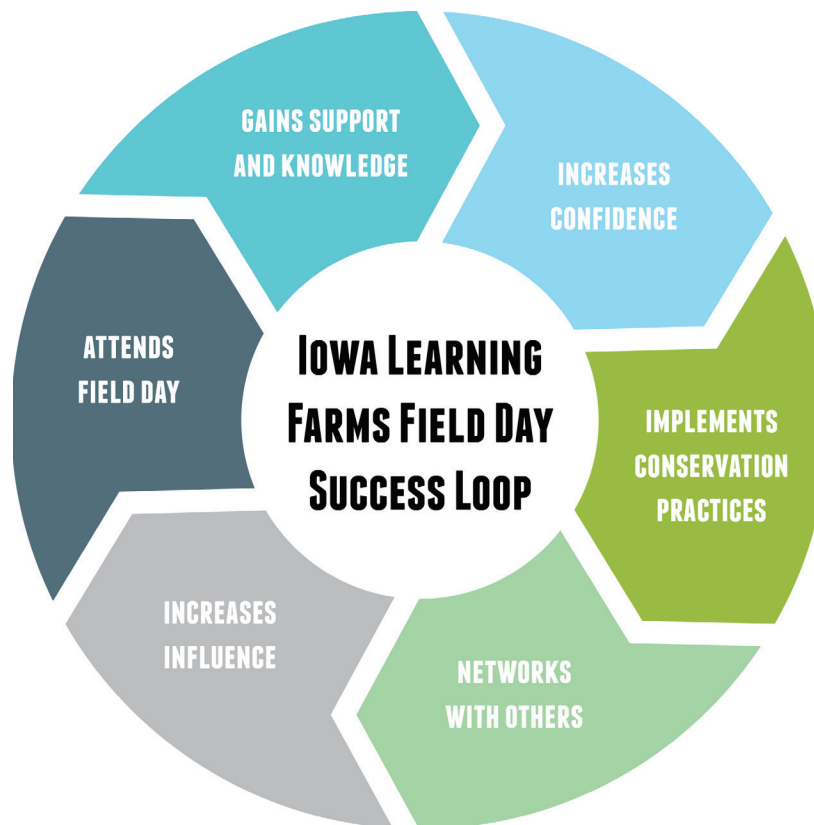
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# WHY FIELD DAYS MATTER

It is well recognized that field days are one of the most effective means of communicating with farmers because of their preference to learn about new land management practices through one-on-one conversations with experts and other farmers. What the Iowa Learning Farms is bringing to the discussion, through their field day success loop, is a greater understanding of why field days are effective through the four-step evaluation process.

For the Iowa Learning Farms team, evaluation isn't just something they do because they 'have' to do it. Evaluation should be viewed as a means to help one understand all the different things that are happening in a given event like a field day. To do this, they use multiple evaluation tools that are included in this toolkit. Once you understand what elements are effective, you can improve your approach to field days so that you can more readily achieve desirable outcomes. In the case of Iowa Learning Farms field days, this means getting more conservation on the land.

The field day evaluation process includes documenting ILF staff impressions of what happened and questions asked at the field day, a short demographic card completed by participants, a two-week follow-up evaluation and a year end evaluation. The most significant data come from the one-page year end questionnaire that asks farmers whether they implemented the changes they said they would in the two-week follow-up evaluation and whether they felt they had influenced other farmers to consider conservation practices.



It was through several years of looking at the responses to those questions that the pattern of the “field day success loop” emerged. The “field day success loop” is simple: farmers who attended field days were more likely than their peers to implement conservation, network with and influence other farmers to consider conservation and often attended multiple field days per year. The more field days a

farmer attends, the more likely he or she is to adopt practices and successfully influence others. These activities extend the impact of field days to new audiences.

By implementing this approach to field days and this multi-faceted approach to evaluation, you will tap into the ability of field days to inspire farmers to change their practices.

**To learn more information about the field day success loop:**

Iowa Learning Farms, annual evaluation reports, [www.iowalearningfarms.org](http://www.iowalearningfarms.org)

Comito, J., Case Haub, B., & Stevenson, N. (2017). Field day success loop. *Journal of Extension*, 55(6), Article 6TOT6. Available at <https://www.joe.org/joe/2017december/tt6.php>

# OVERVIEW OF FIELD DAY TOOLKIT

This Field Day Toolkit is the product of Iowa Learning Farms' many years of planning and hosting field day events across the state of Iowa.

While Iowa Learning Farms utilizes many different outreach approaches, the importance of farmer-to-farmer interactions cannot be overstated. Field days do matter!

Field days and workshops need to be well-planned and -executed to be successful. One of the keys is **keeping field days two hours or less** and focused on, at most, two conservation practices. We encourage you to use the enclosed checklists, sample promotional materials and evaluation materials as guidelines for planning your own conservation outreach event. Please change and adapt the list to fit your specific program and event needs.

## FIELD DAYS VS. WORKSHOPS

In this guide, two different farmer outreach events are referenced: field days and workshops.

- **Field days** are farmer outreach events which include one or more outdoor “field” components.
- **Workshops**, on the other hand, are indoor events with no field component.



# TWO MONTHS OUT: FIELD DAY PLANNING CHECKLIST

## SCHEDULING

Start planning for your field day at least two months out. Field days and workshops can be held any time during the year. However, keep in mind spring and fall field operations and avoid scheduling farmer outreach events during these times!

Iowa Learning Farms polled field day attendees in 2017 to inquire what day(s) and time(s) they prefer to attend events.

- In general, field day attendees indicated a preference for Wednesday events held in the afternoon or after 5 p.m.
- Farmers 35 and younger indicated a preference for events held on Saturdays (48%), followed by Tuesday-Thursday (42%) after 5 p.m. (50%).
- Women indicated that they prefer to attend events on Tuesday-Thursday, either in the morning (41%) or afternoon (57%).

Event date options: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Event time preference: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic(s)/theme(s) of field day (maximum of 2):

*Pair a popular topic like cover crops with a lesser-known topic, such as prairie strips, to help draw a crowd.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

## EVENT DETAILS

### Field Days:

*Choose an event site and host farmer*

1. Identify someone that has successfully implemented the conservation practice(s) you would like to highlight.
2. Contact the farmer directly to see if they would be willing to host and share their story of why they implemented the practice(s), what has worked well and what lessons they have learned through the implementation process. Bear in mind that you may need to adjust the event date and/or time based on the host's availability.



3. Once you have the host confirmed, determine if they have an adequate shop or other indoor space available to use for the meal (also to serve as the rain location, if needed). If they do not have an ‘indoor’ location available, look for a nearby community center or church so the event can be held rain or snow or shine!
4. When planning for the outdoor “field” component of the field day, keep the travel time between sites to 10 minutes or less to minimize losing any attendees between locations. Also consider the terrain that attendees will need to walk on to reach the site, ensuring they can easily and safely see the practice(s) you wish to show.

Farmer host: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/911 address of field day: \_\_\_\_\_

Driving directions to site from local towns: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Workshops:**

*Choose an event site and farmer speaker*

1. Identify someone that has successfully implemented the conservation practice(s) you would like to highlight.
2. Contact the farmer directly to see if they would be willing to share their story of why they implemented the practice(s), what has worked well and what lessons they have learned through the implementation process. Bear in mind that you may need to adjust the event date and/or time based on this farmer’s availability.
3. Select a location with heat/air conditioning that can comfortably seat up to 50 people. Examples include local community centers, church social spaces, Legion/AmVets and local Extension office.

Farmer speaker: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/911 address of workshop site: \_\_\_\_\_

Driving directions to site from local towns: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Potential presenters/speakers for the event:

*Be mindful of the people you ask to present at a field day. Make certain there is a balance between farmer presentations and “experts.” We recommend keeping the total field day to a maximum of 2 hours.*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Topic of Presentation</i>	<i>Length of Presentation</i>

**Share with all speakers the presenter tips found in Appendix II, p.30-31, offering helpful hints for effective talks at field days and workshops, respectively.**

- OPTIONAL -- Special features for the event (Conservation Station, NRCS demonstration, pasture walk, implement dealer)

*Be clear with agribusiness presenters that this is not a sales pitch; it is an opportunity to share their expertise with an audience. ILF evaluations have shown that farmers are more trusting of information that does not come with a sales pitch attached.*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Length of Time Allotted</i>

- Special feature is at a separate location (walk or drive?)

**Share with all speakers the presenter tips found in Appendix II, p.30-31, offering helpful hints for effective talks at field days and workshops, respectively.**

## FOOD

- Caterer or meal provider confirmed (e.g. Pork Producers)

*When placing the initial catering order, start with an estimate of 40 attendees. Determine when the caterers need a final head count and set the deadline for RSVPs accordingly.*

### **SUGGESTED MENU:**

Hot Sandwich

Two Sides

*We recommend offering fruit or fresh vegetables as one of the sides.*

Dessert

Drinks

- Drinks:
  - Water
  - Beverage coolers
  - Coffee during cold weather
- Table service (if provided separately from catering):
  - Utensils
  - Plates
  - Napkins
  - Cups

## EQUIPMENT | SUPPLIES

- Tables
- Folding chairs
- Portable toilets (if necessary) rented
- Sound system/PA
- Field day signs to direct traffic from major roads

## DOOR PRIZES

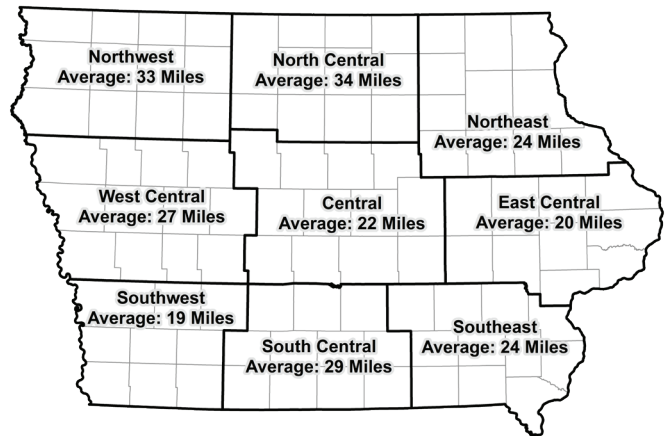
- Door prizes for attendees

*All ILF field days involve the chance to win a door prize. Prizes are small and cost less than \$20 each, such as ILF branded mugs, caps and bags. Local agribusinesses can also be approached for donations. Names are chosen toward the end of the event in order to maintain engagement and enhance participation.*

## PUBLICITY

- Develop a mailing list

*Compile your invitation list the best you can using resources such as plat maps, sending to local agency offices, local Farm Bureau, county Extension offices and county Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Since 2015, ILF has tracked average distance traveled to sponsored field days. On average, attendees travel 25 miles - keeping this in mind will help you target your audience. Use the map at right to see how your area compares to the average distance traveled.*



- Develop post mail list (postcards)
- Develop email list (digital flyers for distribution)

- Determine your RSVP strategy for the field day

*Asking for RSVPs is an excellent way to estimate how much food you need to order for the event. Phone and email have been a reliable way for ILF to collect RSVPs for our field days and workshops. RSVP counts have provided an accurate predictive head count for the majority of past ILF events, with actual attendance often being within 10-15 people of the RSVP count.*

- Write press release

*See Field Day Speaker/Host Interview Form in Appendix I, p.24, to help you interview your speakers/hosts and assist in writing the press release. Topical questions may be substituted as needed. A sample press release is available in Appendix I, p.25.*

- Create flyer invitation

*Sample flyer available in Appendix I, p.26.*

- Create postcard invitation

*Sample postcard invitation available in Appendix I, p.27.*

# THREE WEEKS BEFORE YOUR EVENT

- Finalize field day/workshop program agenda

*Sample field day agenda available in Appendix I, p.28.*

- Distribute press release - aim to send out three weeks in advance to ensure making the print deadline for smaller papers with less frequent distribution.

Send to:

- Local media (newspaper, television, radio)
- Agriculture media (Iowa Farmer Today, Agri-News, Farm News, Farm Bureau Spokesman)
- Local Extension office
- Local NRCS/SWCD office
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- Print and mail postcards

- Email flyers

- Post field day/workshop information on your website

- Post event on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)

- Determine how you will evaluate the field day/workshop.

**Evaluation is at the heart of successful outreach.** A well-planned and -executed evaluation strategy allows you to understand not only who is attending your outreach events, but also how they are thinking about, responding to, and making decisions related to conservation based on the information exchange and dialogue happening both during and after the event. Evaluation provides a concrete means of measuring impacts. Evaluation also serves as a positive feedback loop, allowing for continual improvement in the effectiveness of your outreach efforts!

*Consider utilizing and adapting ILF's evaluation strategies as outlined on p.14. Sample evaluation documents are provided in Appendix III, starting on p.34.*

# ILF APPROACH TO EVALUATION

Evaluation of Iowa Learning Farms outreach events occurs in several stages:

- **Event Evaluations** are completed internally by ILF team members, helping us to understand the audience's level of engagement and helping us to improve future outreach activities.
- **Comment Cards** are filled out by all participants upon arrival at the ILF-sponsored field day or workshop in order to gain a better understanding of who they are and why they are there. This card also provides name and contact information for mailing subsequent evaluation materials to participants.

*Sample Comment Card available in Appendix III, p.35.*

- **Follow-up Evaluations** are mailed to participants at ILF-sponsored field days and workshops that happened before October 15. These questionnaires are sent within two weeks following the event. The evaluation questions range from asking about how effective the field day was, what the quality of the program was, and may also serve as a tool for information gathering regarding farming practices and changes in behavior. The questions focus on the clarity and accessibility of the information received and inquire whether participants plan to make any changes in their land management as a result of the event.

*Sample Follow-Up Evaluation available in Appendix III, p.36.*

- **Year End Evaluations** are mailed only to farmers/operators and landowners at all ILF-sponsored field days and workshops to see if the participants had made the changes they said they were going to make in the earlier Follow-Up Evaluation.

*Sample Year End Evaluation available in Appendix III, p.37.*

# ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR EVENT

- Finalize meal numbers with the caterer

*If the RSVPs are approaching 30 well ahead of the deadline, contact the caterer to let them know that the order will be increasing so they can obtain the ingredients and supplies they need. Be sure to factor in speakers and sponsors, as well. **When providing the caterer with final meal numbers, we recommend using the final RSVP count plus 15 to make sure there is plenty of food available.***

- Confirm portable toilet delivery location and time (if applicable)

- Check the weather forecast for the field day. If inclement weather is a possibility, plan ahead.

*Iowa's weather is unpredictable, plain and simple. To reduce the stress of weather negatively impacting or cancelling your field day, it is encouraged to have an indoor location identified early in the planning process and included in the publicity materials so the event can happen regardless of the forecast and field conditions.*

- Determine what publications you will provide to field day/workshop attendees

*Keep paper handouts to a minimum during the outdoor "field" portion of the event. Publications and handouts are much better indoors!*

## **ILF is happy to provide complimentary copies of any of the publications below:**

- "Talking With Your Tenant" infographic series:
  - Cover Crops
  - No-Till/Strip-Till
  - Denitrifying Practices: Wetlands, Bioreactors, Saturated Buffers
  - Land Use Changes: Prairie Strips, Perennial Cover, Extended Rotations
- Cover Crops in Iowa infographic
- Cover Crop Glossary
- Long Term Rye Cover Crop Yield Report
- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy handout
- How-To DVDs:
  - Cover Crops
  - No-Till
  - Strip-Till
  - Grassed Waterways
  - Manure Management

**Contact ILF's Conservation Outreach Specialist, Liz Juchems ([ejuchems@iastate.edu](mailto:ejuchems@iastate.edu)), at least one week before your scheduled event to submit your request for publications.**



# ONE DAY BEFORE YOUR EVENT

## FIELD DAY/WORKSHOP PACKING LIST

- Tables
- Folding chairs
- Comment/sign in cards
- Pens
- Blank index cards for participants to write down questions
- Field day sponsor acknowledgement signs  
*Sample sponsor acknowledgement sign available in Appendix II, p.33.*
- Printed agendas for all speakers  
*Sample agenda available in Appendix I, p.28.*
- Computer (if applicable)
- Projector (if applicable)
- PowerPoint clicker (if applicable)
- Portable PA system with microphone
- Camera
- Door prizes
- Extension cords
- Duct tape for taping down extension cords
- Display boards
- Publications and handouts
- Evaluation materials

## FOOD ITEMS

- Drinks:
  - Water
  - Beverage coolers
  - Coffee during cold weather
- Disposable food service gloves
- Table service supplies (if needed):
  - Utensils
  - Plates
  - Napkins
  - Cups
  - Serving spoons

# DAY OF THE EVENT

## SIGNAGE

- Place field day signs to direct traffic from major roads

## SIGN IN/WELCOME TABLE

- Comment/sign in cards
- Pens
- Outreach Materials:
  - DVDs
  - Handouts

## TECHNOLOGY

- Turn on and test portable PA system and microphone ahead of time.
- Turn on and test computer/projector system before starting. Tape down extension cords to ensure any tripping hazards are addressed ahead of time.
- Have PowerPoint presentations and any images queued up prior to starting.

## FOOD TABLES

- Pick up bags of ice to chill water coolers as well as any other cold drinks.
- Place thank you and sponsor signs in prominent location, e.g. on food table, for attendees to see when waiting in food line.  
*Sample sponsor acknowledgement sign available in Appendix II, p.33.*
- Consider having someone stand by or serve food to ensure there's enough for everyone to have a serving. Seconds can be self-served if there are extras.

## GETTING STARTED

- Welcome people as they arrive!
- Designate an emcee to keep the program running on time/on schedule. Provide the emcee with the handout below, outlining their responsibilities for the day.
- Begin the field day/workshop following the developed agenda.
- Ensure that all speakers/presenters utilize the microphone system, even those that “have loud voices.” You want to ensure that the information is clearly heard by all in attendance.
- Utilize the discussion questions on the following pages to facilitate high quality information exchange and dialogue.



## EMCEE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Welcome and thank everyone for coming
2. Introduce yourself
3. Describe your organization/project and funding partners
4. Introduce, acknowledge, thank host farmer
5. Explain comment/sign in cards and evaluation system
6. Announce agenda for event
7. Poll the audience: How many here are using \_\_\_\_\_(practice)?
8. Encourage conversation on today’s topic during the meal
9. Follow agenda for speakers (with their professional titles)
10. Keep program running on schedule
11. Following last speaker, thank meal provider, remind guests of resources (DVDs and handouts), and release them

# FIELD DAY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## STRIP-TILL / NO-TILL

- What motivated you to try strip-till/no-till?
- How many acres? Are you using it in corn or soybeans? Or both?
- What factors affected your decision making?
- Strip-till: Are you strip-tilling in the fall or in the spring? Why?
- What equipment modifications have you made?
- Have you purchased new equipment/modified existing equipment/renting equipment/sharing equipment with others?
- What do you see as being the greatest benefits of strip-till (no-till)?
- What challenges have you encountered and how did you address them?
- What advice would you give to other producers considering strip-till (no-till)?
- Tell us how you're integrating nutrient application/nutrient management with strip-till (no-till).

## COVER CROPS

- What species of cover crops are you using? Why?
- How many acres have you seeded with cover crops?
- How did you make the decision about which cover crop species to use?
- Planting date? How were the cover crops seeded? Timing in relation to fall harvest?
- Termination date? How were the cover crops terminated? Timing in relation to spring planting?
- What amount of growth did you observe in fall and spring, respectively?
- What motivated you to adopt cover crops?
- What are your goals in using cover crops in your operation?
- Do you have livestock that graze cover crops? What species?
- Grazing: In your opinion, what cover crops have provided the best forage value?
- What support did you receive as you were making the decision to add cover crops to your farming operation?
- What advice would you give to other farmers who are considering cover crops?

## GENERAL CONSERVATION QUESTIONS

- What motivated you to adopt \_\_\_\_\_ (practice)?
- What do you see as being the greatest benefits of \_\_\_\_\_ (practice)?
- What are the challenges of \_\_\_\_\_ (practice) and how have you addressed them?
- What advice would you give to other farmers who are considering \_\_\_\_\_(practice)?
- How long have you been using \_\_\_\_\_ (practice)?
- Poll: How many here are using \_\_\_\_\_ (practice)?
- Poll: How many here have heard of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy?

# AFTER THE EVENT

Send follow-up press release and/or photo of event to local media

Send follow-up evaluation to attendees within two weeks of the event

In the weeks following your field day, prepare and send an evaluation questionnaire to attendees. The evaluation questions may range from asking about how effective the field day was, what the quality of the program was, and may also serve as a tool for information gathering regarding farming practices and changes in behavior. Customize the evaluation questions to suit the needs of your organization and get the kind of feedback you will find most helpful. This information may help you tailor your program to better fit your audience, as well as understand what kind of impact your field days are having.

*Sample evaluation documents are provided in Appendix III, starting on p.34.*

Send thank you notes to speakers

Send thank you notes to sponsors



# APPENDIX I: PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

# FIELD DAY SPEAKER/HOST INTERVIEW FORM FOR PRESS RELEASE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (911 location): \_\_\_\_\_

Family (spouse, kids): \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been farming? \_\_\_\_\_

How many acres do you farm? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a century or heritage farm? \_\_\_\_\_

Other components of farming operation besides crops (cattle, hogs, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Strip-Till / No-Till**

How many acres are you strip-tilling/no-tilling? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you using it in corn or soybeans? Both? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been doing this practice? \_\_\_\_\_

What factors affected your decision-making? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you strip-tilling in the fall or in the spring? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Cover Crops**

What types of cover crops are you using? \_\_\_\_\_

How many acres have you seeded with cover crops? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been using cover crops? \_\_\_\_\_

What motivated you to adopt cover crops? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you graze cover crops? \_\_\_\_\_

# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE - DISTRIBUTED 3-4 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*October 20, 2017*

## **Cover Crop Workshop to be held in Oakland on December 13th**

AMES, IOWA—Iowa Learning Farms, along with East Pottawattamie County Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service, will host a cover crop workshop on Wednesday, December 13th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Community Center in Oakland. The event is free and open to the whole family and includes a complimentary meal.

The workshop will include Pottawattamie County farmer Russ Brandes. As the 4th generation to farm the land near Hancock, Russ is raising corn and soybeans on 400 acres of land. He also manages a small cow-calf herd and hogs on the family farm. As an East Pottawattamie County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, Russ has been leading by example through the use of no-tillage since the mid-1980s. In 2013, Russ began to add cover crops to his operation by flying ryegrass into his soybeans. Since then, Russ has significantly expanded the acres covered and cover crops species used, including cereal rye, oats, radish, brown mustard, Sunn hemp and many more. Russ will share advice for successfully adding cover crops as well as discussing how he has overcome challenges.

The workshop agenda will continue with Stefan Gailans, Practical Farmers of Iowa research and field crops director. He will share results from on-farm cover crop research projects and ideas for maximizing cover crop benefits. Liz Juchems, Iowa Learning Farms events coordinator, will share results from cover crop projects examining species selection, water quality implications, and soil health indicators such as earthworms.

The field day will be held at the Oakland Community Center, 614 Dr Van See Road, Oakland. The workshop is free and open to the whole family, but reservations are suggested to ensure adequate space and food. Please RSVP to Liz Juchems at 515-294-5429 or [ilf@iastate.edu](mailto:ilf@iastate.edu).

For more information about Iowa Learning Farms, visit [www.iowalearningfarms.org](http://www.iowalearningfarms.org).

Established in 2004, Iowa Learning Farms is building a Culture of Conservation by encouraging adoption of conservation practices. Farmers, researchers and ILF team members are working together to identify and implement the best management practices that improve water quality and soil health while remaining profitable. Partners of Iowa Learning Farms include the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (USEPA Section 319).

**Contact:**

Liz Juchems  
Conservation Outreach Specialist  
[ejuchems@iastate.edu](mailto:ejuchems@iastate.edu)  
515-294-5429

Terry Gleaves  
NRCS Soil Conservation Technician  
[name@email.com](mailto:name@email.com)  
712-482-6486 ext. 3

**SAMPLE FLYER -  
DISTRIBUTED 3-4 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT**



**FIELD DAY TITLE,  
ONE OR TWO LINES**

**LOCATION NAME  
STREET ADDRESS, CITY, IA 50000**

**THURSDAY, JUN. 7**

**5:30-7:30 PM**

**RSVP BY MONTH XX  
515.294.5429 OR ILF@IASTATE.EDU**

Speaker Name, Title

-Topic

Speaker Name, Title

-Topic

Speaker Name, Title

-Topic

Demonstration information.

**FIELD DAY TOPIC**

**FIELD DAY**

**THIS FIELD DAY IS FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND INCLUDES A COMPLIMENTARY MEAL.**

**ADDITIONAL FIELD DAY SPONSORS: IOWA COVER CROP WORKING GROUP, PRACTICAL FARMERS OF IOWA, USDA - AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND OUTREACH**



**SAMPLE POSTCARD -  
MAILED 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT**



**FIELD DAY TITLE,  
ONE OR TWO LINES**

**LOCATION NAME  
STREET ADDRESS  
CITY, IA 50000**

**THURSDAY, AUG. 30  
5:30-7:30 PM**

**THIS FIELD DAY IS FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
AND INCLUDES A COMPLIMENTARY MEAL.**

**RSVP BY MONTH XX  
515.294.5429 OR ILF@IASTATE.EDU**

**IOWA LEARNING FARMS**  
1201 Sukup Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011-3080

# SAMPLE FIELD DAY AGENDA

**5:00pm** - ILF Welcome/Introductions  
(5 min)

**5:05pm** - Steve Berger: Washington Co. farmer  
will discuss using cover crops in his operation  
(25 min)

**5:30pm** - Mark Hanna: ISU Extension Agricultural Engineer  
will discuss equipment needs for using cover crops with no-till  
(30 min)

**6:00pm** - Greg Brenneman: ISU Extension Agricultural Engineer  
will discuss manure management in a no-till/cover crop system  
(15 min)

*Equipment on display (15 mins, as well as during/after meal):*

- John Deere 1770NT planter with Precision Planting's CleanSweep row cleaner, DeltaForce hydraulic down pressure, and vDrive planter meter that the Bergers use to plant corn into living and terminated cover crops and to establish a good stand.
- CrustBuster All Plant drill with 10-inch spacings set up for no-till planting soybeans and cereal rye.
- Houle manure spreader equipped with VTI vertical tillage injectors.

**6:30pm** - Meal and door prize drawing  
(30 min)

**7:00pm** - Adjourn

# **APPENDIX II: PRESENTER & SPONSOR MATERIALS**



# FIELD DAY PRESENTER TIPS

*For farmer outreach events with one or more outdoor “field” components*



## 1. UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

Over 83% of attendees are farmers and landowners. Average age of farmer/operators = 55. Average age of landowners = 64. Average distance traveled = 25.



## 2. SPEAK LOUDLY, SLOWLY AND CLEARLY

Use the PA microphone, even if you think you have a loud voice. Repeat the questions asked prior to answering. You want your message heard – all the way on the back!



## 3. BE AWARE OF TIME

Since 2004, ILF has used feedback from attendees to develop an effective field day with about 90 minutes of program and 30 minutes for a meal. To end on time, each speaker needs to stick to their allotted time. For example: if you are allotted 20 minutes – plan for 15 minutes of content and 5 minutes for questions and discussion. ILF staff moderates the program and will be sure to let you know when your time is up to keep the program running on time.



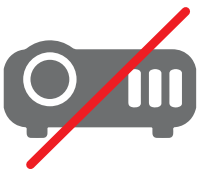
## 4. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Getting familiar with your presentation is key to a successful delivery. We need to stay on time (without rushing through presentations) and knowing specific points you want to cover in the time allowed helps us keep the entire field day on schedule.



## 5. BE RELATABLE

Using humor is a great way to break barriers between presenters and the audience or making your presentation conversational and taking questions throughout the presentation. Use on-farm examples when appropriate, so they know you're connected to farmers.



## 6. GO OLD SCHOOL - DITCH THE POWERPOINT

PowerPoint does not work for field days – the lighting doesn't cooperate, the screen is too small for the space, etc. Instead consider using a one-page (2-sided) handout to convey the most important points you want them to remember or provide photos.



## 7. SPEAKING OF HANDOUTS

If speaking outdoors, save the handouts for when we return inside so they can actually take it home with them. Giving them too many handouts or copies of presentation slides = information overload. Keep it simple – one-page (front and back)! We can print any handouts you wish to use if they are provided 2-3 days in advance.



## 8. READ YOUR AUDIENCE

It has been estimated that more than three quarters of communication is non-verbal. Your audience will provide feedback without having to say a word – at best leaning in or nodding in agreement to show engagement and at worst falling asleep. To keep the audience engaged, moderation is key! It's better to have ample time for discussion, questions, and clarification to ensure that participants are going home with your key points versus trying to pack in too much content.

# WORKSHOP PRESENTER TIPS

*For indoor farmer outreach events*



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## 6. USE HANDOUTS RESPONSIBLY

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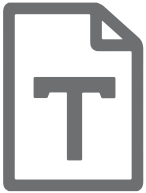
# HELPFUL REMINDERS WHEN USING POWERPOINT

*For indoor farmer outreach events*



## 1. DEVELOP A ROADMAP

When we know we have a presentation coming up, we often fall in the pattern of jumping right in and making slides. However, first, step back and consider your learning outcomes! Frame your presentation's talking points accordingly, and develop a roadmap around that. Only AFTER planning out your roadmap should you start developing slides! Your presentation should tell a story, one you could still tell if the power fails and PowerPoint is unavailable to you.



## 2. USE TEXT IN MODERATION

Choose your words wisely – NO full paragraphs! Some general recommendations include:

- 1 idea per slide
- Maximum of 4 bullet points per slide
- Align text either left or right (center is harder to read, and less professional)



## 3. LESS IS MORE: HIGHLIGHT THE HEROES IN THE DATA

Make sure that any charts and graphs included in your PowerPoint slides are sized appropriately so they can actually be read -- one chart or graph per slide is a good rule of thumb. Further, highlight the key components in the data set by circling them or using arrows to help direct the learners' eyes and connect with the results. You can also pull out and showcase key numbers by making them big and bold.



## 4. HARNESS THE POWER OF PICTURES

Photographs, diagrams, and schematics can be incredibly powerful to supplement your narrative. Several considerations include:

- Use images that are high resolution/high quality.
- Use your own photographs, diagrams, and schematics. –OR- Be sure to obtain permission and give credit accordingly.
- Crop photographs to highlight key elements of the image.
- Utilize circles or arrows if there are particular elements to which you'd like to draw attention.
- Consider the placement of photographs on the slide, balancing images and white space. On the other hand, full screen images can be very powerful – in certain instances, no text may be needed! A picture is worth a thousand words.

**SAMPLE SPONSOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SIGN-  
PLACE IN PROMINENT LOCATION, E.G. ON FOOD TABLE**

**THANK YOU TO OUR  
PARTNERS & SPONSORS**

---

**XX COUNTY SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**XX WATERSHED PROJECT**

**IOWA LEARNING FARMS**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION AND  
OUTREACH**



# APPENDIX III: EVALUATION MATERIALS

# SAMPLE COMMENT CARD - FILLED IN AT EVENT



## Field Day Participant Information

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Which describes you? (check all that apply)

Farmer/operator    Landowner    Government employee    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear of the event? (check all that apply)

Word-of-mouth    ISU Extension Staff    District Office    Mailing    Radio    Newspaper

Website    Email    Social Media    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you attending today's event?

\_\_\_\_\_

# SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION - MAILED 2 WEEKS AFTER EVENT



## EVALUATION OF IOWA LEARNING FARMS COVER CROPS FIELD DAY

Name of Field Day – Location – Date

Help us improve future field days and workshops! Your experiences and opinions will help the ILF team plan upcoming activities including field days and workshops, and overall approach to the project.

**On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):**

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of the field day	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of Speaker A, Title/Organization (aka ISU Extension)	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of Speaker B, Title (aka farmer)	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of Speaker C, Title	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of what you saw during field portion	5	4	3	2	1

**Length of Field day/workshop:**  Too Short     Just Right     Too Long

**On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the importance of take-home follow-up materials (circle the number):**

	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Slightly helpful	Not at all helpful
1-page document	5	4	3	2	1
4-page document	5	4	3	2	1
Full research report	5	4	3	2	1
DVD	5	4	3	2	1
Presentation slides	5	4	3	2	1

**Are you actively farming?**     yes     no                      **How many crop acres do you farm?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you lease land to a tenant?**     yes, acres \_\_\_\_\_     no

**Do you have any conservation measures built into your lease?**     yes     no

**What types of conservation practices are used on the land you own/operate? (check all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No-till/Strip till, acres _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Cover Crops, acres _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Extended Crop Rotation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotational Grazing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Strips<br><input type="checkbox"/> Grassed Waterways/Filter Strips/Buffers |
|--|--|

# SAMPLE YEAR END EVALUATION - SENT IN JANUARY FOR EVENTS IN THE PRIOR YEAR

**Evaluation of Field Day: XXXX**



**Which describes you?** (check all that apply)

Farmer/operator     Landowner    \_\_\_\_\_

**How many acres do you farm?** \_\_\_\_\_

**List the number of field days/workshops you attended in 2017**

*Please describe the ways you have integrated what you learned from this field day or workshop into your farming operation:*

**I fall-seeded cover crops on some (or more) of my acres in fall 2017.**     Yes  No

- List number of total acres with cover crops \_\_\_\_\_ • New cover crop acres in 2017 \_\_\_\_\_
- Type(s) of cover crop planted \_\_\_\_\_
- List the year you first planted cover crops \_\_\_\_\_
- Was cost share used?  Yes  No

**I increased use of surface residue (no-till or strip-till) management on some of my acres in 2017.**

Yes  No    • List number of total acres \_\_\_\_\_ • New acres in 2017 \_\_\_\_\_

**I used prairie strips in my row crop fields to reduce erosion and create pollinator habitat.**

Yes  No    • List number of total acres \_\_\_\_\_ • New acres in 2017 \_\_\_\_\_

I'm considering it  Too expensive     Never heard of it

**I discussed benefits and challenges of cover crops/no-till/strip-till/prairie strips with my landowners/tenants.**

Yes  No

**I networked conservation ideas with other farmers or my farmer clients.**     Yes     No

If yes, how successful were you?

I influenced one other farmer     I influenced two or more farmers     I influenced no others

**I did not make any conservation changes to my farming operation in 2017.**

**What percent (0-100) of your cropland contains tile drainage?** \_\_\_\_\_ %

What is the condition of your tile drainage?

New     Old but works fine     Old and needs replacement     Not sure

**Approximately how many years ago was most of your tile drainage installed?** \_\_\_\_\_

*As part of Iowa Learning Farms, we are focused on learning from you. Your opinion matters to us.*

**What are the biggest barriers to implementing additional conservation practices?** (check all that apply)

Cost of implementation     Concern of yield impact     Landlord  
 Knowledge     Equipment     Labor/time

**The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy calls for reductions in nonpoint source loads: 41% for nitrogen and 29% for phosphorus. Based on your knowledge of the local area, is this achievable?**

Yes     No     Never heard of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy

**Helping to meet the Nutrient Reduction Strategy's goals is a high priority for me.**

Strongly Agree     Agree     Uncertain     Disagree     Strongly Disagree









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*Printing and distribution provided by the Iowa Watershed Approach*