



IOWA LEARNING FARMS FIELD DAY TOOLKIT

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ABOUT IOWA LEARNING FARMS

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, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources, EPA Section 319 Grant Program and GROWMARK, Inc.

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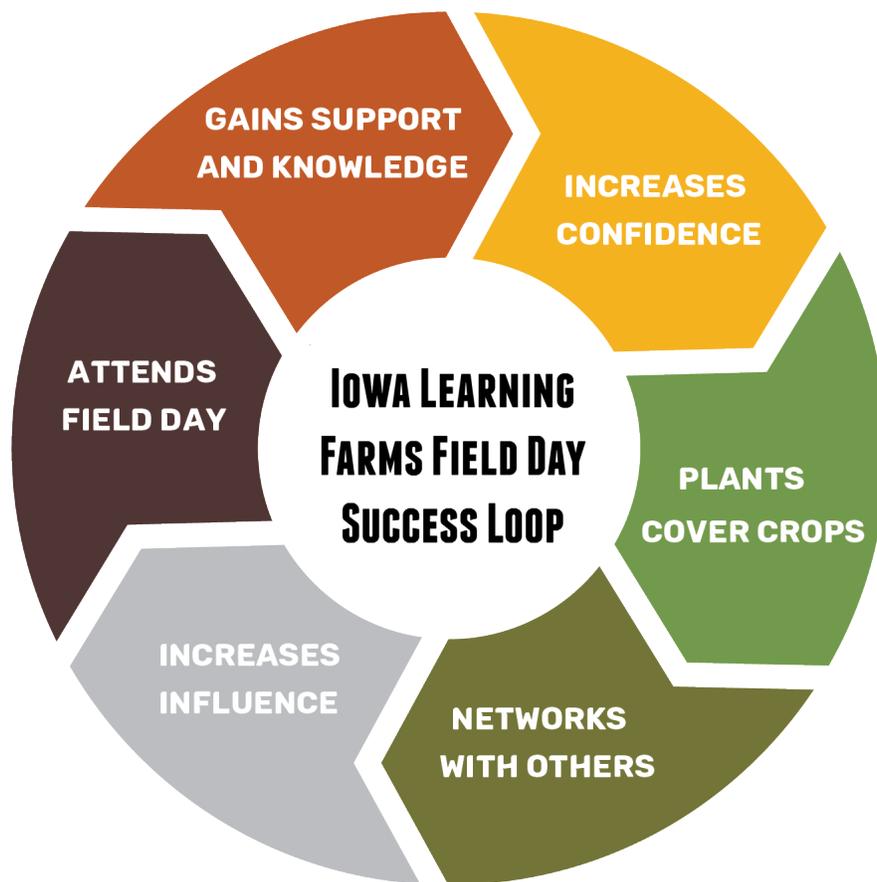
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WHY FIELD DAYS MATTER

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

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 2022 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 morning, followed closely by after 5pm.
- Farmers 35 and younger indicated a preference for events held on Tuesday-Thursday (42%) in the afternoon (45%) or after 5 p.m. (33%).
- Women indicated that they prefer to attend events on Tuesday-Thursday, either in the morning (49%) or afternoon (48%).

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: _____

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: _____

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.

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

SUGGESTED MENU:

Hot Sandwich

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

Dessert

Drinks

EQUIPMENT | SUPPLIES

- Tables
- Folding chairs
- Portable toilets (if necessary)
- 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. 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.

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 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 and Demographic 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. The comment cards provide name and contact information for mailing subsequent evaluation materials to participants, while the demographic cards are anonymous to better collect information.
Sample Comment Card and Demographic Card available in Appendix III, p.34-35.
- **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 available on our website: www.iowalearningfarms.org/resources. Contact ILF's Conservation and Cover Crop Outreach Specialist, Liz Ripley (ejuchems@iastate.edu), at least two weeks 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
- Printed agendas for all speakers
Sample agenda available in Appendix I, p.28.
- Computer (if applicable)
- Projector (if applicable)
- Projector screen (if applicable)
- PowerPoint clicker (if applicable)
- Portable PA system with microphone
- Camera
- Door prizes
- Extension cords
- Duct tape for taping down extension cords
- Publications and handouts
- Evaluation materials

FOOD ITEMS

- Drinks:
 - Water
 - Beverage coolers
 - Coffee during cold weather
- Ziploc bags for packaging remaining food
- 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 and demographic cards
- Pens
- Outreach materials

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.
- 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

- Welcome and thank everyone for coming
- Introduce yourself
- Describe your organization/project and funding partners

Partners: _____

- Introduce, acknowledge, thank host farmer
- Explain comment/sign in cards and evaluation system
- Announce agenda for event
- Poll the audience:
 How many here are using _____(practice)?
- Encourage conversation on today's topic during the meal
- Follow agenda for speakers (with their professional titles)
- Keep program running on schedule
- Following last speaker, thank meal provider, remind guests of resources, 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

August 9, 2023

Grazing Field Day to be held August 30 near Eddyville at Reclaimed Abandoned Mine Land

AMES, IOWA—[Iowa Learning Farms](#), in partnership with [Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship](#), [Iowa State University Extension and Outreach](#), and [Pathfinders RC&D](#), is hosting a grazing field day on Wednesday, August 30 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Calvin Van Genderen's farm and reclaimed abandoned mine land near Eddyville. The free event is open to farmers and landowners and includes a complimentary meal.

Facing challenges with his herd's health and calving, Wapello County cattle farmer, Calvin Van Genderen determined it was tied to the coal mining residual in the water pools of his pasture areas. Working with the IDALS Abandoned Mine Land Program and gaining access to a rural water system improved overall herd health and grazing potential for the area. A newly reclaimed mine seeded this spring will be featured during the field portion of this grazing field day.

Additional speakers include Chris Clark, ISU Extension and Outreach beef specialist, sharing best management practices for rotational grazing on fragile lands and managing systems for dry conditions, Vince Sitzmann, IDALS mines and minerals bureau chief, discussing the AML program and history of the sites, and Kevin Andersen, Iowa DNR private lands biologist, highlighting how these AML program sites can benefit pollinators like the monarch butterfly.

Iowa's historic position as a coal-producing state has led the IDALS AML Program that is working to reclaim some 12,000 acres across 300 abandoned surface coal mine sites in Iowa. The hundreds of currently abandoned mines include hazardous features that continue to impact the environment. By employing mass grading, neutralization and installation of conservation practices, the program is returning these sites to working lands.

The field day will be at Calvin Van Genderen's farm, 19572 165th St. Eddyville, IA 52553. The event is free and open to farmers and landowners, though we require reservations to ensure adequate space and food. For reasonable accommodations and to RSVP, please contact Liz Ripley at 515-294-5429 or ilf@iastate.edu. Attendees will be entered in a drawing that evening for ISU Prairie Strips honey.

Iowa Learning Farms field days and workshops are supported by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. For more information about Iowa Learning Farms, [visit www.iowalearningfarms.org](http://www.iowalearningfarms.org).

About Iowa Learning Farms

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](#), [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), and [Iowa Department of Natural Resources](#), [EPA Section 319 Grant Program](#) and [GROWMARK, Inc.](#)

Contact:

Liz Ripley, Conservation and Cover Crop Outreach Specialist, ejuchems@iastate.edu, 515-294-5429

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

GRAZING FIELD DAY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2023

10:30AM-12:30PM

**CALVIN VAN GENDEREN FARM AND
RECLAIMED ABANDONED MINE LAND
19572 165TH ST.
EDDYVILLE, IA 52553**



FREE FIELD DAY AND COMPLIMENTARY MEAL FOR FARMERS, LANDOWNERS AND CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS

RSVP BY AUGUST 23 | 515.294.5429 OR ILF@IASTATE.EDU



**IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Extension and Outreach



NFWF



Supported by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. Contact Liz Ripley at 515-294-5429 for reasonable accommodations.

SAMPLE POSTCARD - MAILED 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30
10:30AM-12:30PM

GRAZING **FIELD DAY**



**CALVIN VAN GENDEREN FARM AND
RECLAIMED ABANDONED MINE LAND**
19572 165TH ST.
EDDYVILLE, IA 52553

*This workshop is supported by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
Contact Liz Ripley 515-294-5429 for reasonable accommodations.*

IOWA LEARNING FARMS

Iowa State University
609 Bissell Road
Ames, IA 50011-3080



GRAZING FIELD DAY
**CALVIN VAN GENDEREN FARM AND
RECLAIMED ABANDONED MINE LAND**
19572 165TH ST.
EDDYVILLE, IA 52553

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30 | 10:30AM-12:30PM

This workshop is free, open to the public and includes a complimentary meal.

Please RSVP by August 23
515.294.5429 or
ilf@iastate.edu

EVENT AGENDA

- ▶ **Calvin Van Genderen**
Wapello County Grazer
- ▶ **Chris Clark**
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
- ▶ **Vince Sitzmann**
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- ▶ **Kevin Andersen**
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- ▶ **Complimentary Lunch**



SAMPLE FIELD DAY AGENDA

9:30am – ILF team arrives with tables and chairs, PA system, sign in materials

10:30am – Welcome (ILF emcee)

10:35am – Vince Sitzmann, IDALS, background of AML program and site

10:55am – Calvin Van Genderen, host, leads walk to newly reclaimed site and describes his operation and experience with AML

11:15am – Chris Clark, ISU Extension and Outreach, best management practices for rotational grazing – especially on fragile land, managing grazing systems when in very dry conditions

11:35am – Kevin Andersen, Iowa DNR Private Lands Biologist, how areas are beneficial to pollinators

11:55am – Final Q&A, raffle

12:00pm – Lunch

12:30pm – Adjourn

APPENDIX II: PRESENTER 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



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. USE HANDOUTS RESPONSIBLY

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.



7. 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.

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.

APPENDIX III: EVALUATION MATERIALS

SAMPLE COMMENT CARD - FILLED IN AT EVENT



Field Day Participant Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

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

- Word-of-mouth ISU Extension District Office
- Mailing Radio Newspaper Website Email
- Social Media Other: _____

I would like to learn more about (check all that apply):

- Nutrient Reducing Wetland:** constructed wetlands fed by tile-drainage water, designed to enhance water quality
- Oxbow:** wetland that occurs when water cuts across the landscape at a bend in the river to form a free-standing water body
- Bioreactor:** tile-drainage water is routed to a woodchip-filled trench at the edge of the field
- Saturated Buffer:** tile-drainage water is directed into a lateral tile that runs beneath a buffer next to a creek or stream

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC CARD - FILLED IN AT EVENT



**Thank you for
attending today!**

Age _____

Male Female Prefer not to respond

Please check the category that best describes you:

Farmer/operator Landowner New to farming
 Would like to farm Government Other _____

of row crop acres _____

Total acres _____

Percent of farmland you own _____

Do you have livestock?

No Pasture-based Confinement Open lot

**Which days of the week work best to attend a workshop/
field day? (check all that apply)**

Mon Tue Wed Thur Fri Sat Sun

**What time of day works best to attend a workshop/field
day?**

(check all that apply)

Morning Afternoon Evening after 5 Evening after 7

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION - MAILED 2 WEEKS AFTER EVENT



Evaluation of Iowa Learning Farms Field Day

Van Genderen Farm | Eddyville, IA

August 30, 2023

Help us improve future field days and workshops! Your experiences and opinions will help the ILF team plan upcoming activities including field days/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 Calvin Van Genderen, Farmer Host	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of Vince Sitzmann, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of Chris Clark, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of Kevin Andersen, Iowa DNR	5	4	3	2	1
Effectiveness of what you saw during the field portion	5	4	3	2	1

Length of workshop: Too Short Just Right Too Long

Are you actively farming? No Yes, # of acres _____

Do you lease land to a tenant? No Yes, # of acres _____

Do you rent land from a landlord? No Yes, # of acres _____

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover Crops, acres _____
• 2022 Planting Date _____
• Method and Rate _____
• Species _____
• 2023 Termination Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Strips | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollinator Habitat
<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Crop Rotation
<input type="checkbox"/> Rotational Grazing
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient Reduction Wetland
<input type="checkbox"/> Oxbow
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturated Buffer
<input type="checkbox"/> Bioreactor |
|---|--|

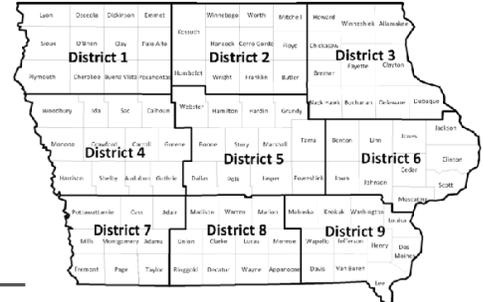
SAMPLE YEAR END EVALUATION - SENT IN JANUARY FOR EVENTS IN THE PRIOR YEAR



**Evaluation of Field Day:
Date, Name of Field Day, Location**

Which describes you? (check all that apply)

- Farmer/operator Acres farmed _____
- Landowner Acres leased to a tenant _____
- Primary location of my farm by district _____
(see map at right)



Total number of field days/workshops you attended in 2022 _____

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

I (or my tenant) planted cover crops on some of my acres in fall 2022. Yes No

- Total acres with cover crops _____ New cover crop acres in 2022 _____
- Fall 2022 seeding date _____ Anticipated 2023 termination date _____
- Type(s) of cover crop planted _____
- Year you first planted cover crops _____ Was cost share used this fall? Yes No
- If cost share was not available, what percent of the above cover crop acres would you maintain?
- None 50% 100% Other: _____

I (or my tenant) used surface residue (no-till/strip-till) management on some of my acres in 2022. Yes No

Total acres of no-till/strip-till _____ New acres of no-till/strip-till in 2022 _____

I discussed benefits and challenges of cover crops/no-till/strip-till 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? Influenced 1 farmer Influenced 2+ farmers Influenced no others

I did not make any conservation changes to my farming operation in 2022.

What additional practice(s) have you implemented or are you currently using? (check all that apply)

- Water quality enhancement wetland Extended rotations Saturated buffer
- Rotational grazing Bioreactor Soil testing every 3 years

What is your #1 reason for implementing conservation practices? (check one)

- Variable weather Soil health Water quality
- Wildlife habitat Landlord stipulation Reduce soil erosion

What is your likelihood of using farming-related applications (apps) for smartphones/tablets? (check one)

- Very likely Likely Neutral Unlikely Very unlikely



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