



LSP Soil Builders Network Newsletter



December 2025

LSP Soil Builders' is a farmer-to-farmer network using practices such as no-till, cover cropping, diversified rotations, and well-managed grazing to improve water infiltration, reduce reliance on inputs, and regenerate soil health.

Happy Holidays!



Cattle bale grazing on pasture at Enchanted Meadows, owned by Soil Health Hub members Chad and Melissa Crowley near La Crescent, Minn. Members like the Crowleys exchange grazing tips, tricks, and challenges through Soil Health Hub meetings and WhatsApp groups, providing them with real-time, localized feedback on daily farming affairs. Reach out to our Soil Health Team to learn more about joining a Hub.

As we wrap up another year of working to keep people and the land together, promoting sustainable agriculture, and developing healthy communities, we can't help but feel grateful. We know that this was a difficult season for many farmers. Nonetheless, it's working with farmers who envision a better food and farming system that keeps us motivated.

Moving into 2026, we continue to imagine a countryside where the soil, water, air, and natural world are healthy, with more successful stewardship farmers raising both livestock and crops on the land and strong local economies where all can succeed. We know this may sound like a lofty goal, but we think that rural farming communities are worth it. In preparation to continue this sometimes challenging, but ever-worthwhile work, we will be taking time for some rest this holiday season. We wish you all the same and hope you have time for friends, family, and togetherness this month.

See you in the New Year!

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NEWSLETTERS, HUB
MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS,
OR COMMUNITY EVENTS?



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an LSP member today!**

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Network News

LSP Soil Health Survey Results Have Arrived!



Over the past year, LSP's Soil Health team partnered with University of Minnesota researchers to conduct the most in-depth assessment of our Soil Builders Network (SBN) to date. If you were one of the over 500 farmers who took the Soil Health survey, **thank you!** We are grateful to the members of the Austin and Plainview Soil Hubs who met with the U of M researchers to share their perspectives about decision-making related to soil-building practices.

This research will help us better understand what makes the difference for farmers to sustain regenerative practices. Survey responses offer clearer insight into how farmer-to-farmer learning, peer networks, and local Soil Hubs support the ongoing decisions that make it possible to keep soil health practices in place.

[Read the Report](#)



LSP's Farm Beginnings Course has Begun!

This past weekend, the Land Stewardship Project's '25-26 Farm Beginnings' class was launched in Maple Grove, Minn., with 44 people enrolled. The class is designed for new or prospective farmers who want to develop marketing, goal-setting, and financial skills. During the next session, Adam Devlin from the University of Minnesota will be presenting on soil health and the principles of minimizing soil disturbance, keeping soil covered, maximizing living roots year-round, and increasing plant and animal diversity. If you or someone you know is interested in enrolling in the 2026-2027 Farm Beginnings class next fall, [click here](#) for more information.

[Learn More](#)

Growing New Grains for Better Bread

This fall, Roscoe and Jenny of Full Circle Farm in western Minnesota planted two wheat varieties that were completely new to them: Bickford and Erismen. They first learned about them at a small grains meeting hosted by the Land Stewardship Project in early August, and came home excited to give them a try.

[Read The Article](#)



MAHA Gives Regenerative Ag a Moment in the Sun

Why a soil-health shoutout from RFK Jr.'s federal commission matters to toe-dippers, early adopters and true believers.

[Read The Article](#)



Ear to the Ground 387: Dumping the Dirt Dogma

When farmers challenged what Kris Nichols had learned from her college textbooks, the soil microbiologist didn't dismiss them — instead, she dug deeper into the world beneath our feet. (1 of 2 parts)

[Listen to the Podcast](#)



Soil Health Resources



U of M invites farmers across Greater MN to apply for funding

Funding is available for farmers across Greater Minnesota to implement climate adaptation and mitigation strategies on their farms through the U of M Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships Farmer Climate Action Fund. Small grants will be awarded through a competitive process to support on-farm projects. Priority will be given to projects that can be completed by Dec. 31, 2026. Applications are due Jan. 2, 2026.

[Learn More](#)

Winter Workshops



'Beyond Exports: Rebuilding Local Markets' Winter Workshop Jan. 27

Dive deeper with our **FREE** winter workshop in Rochester, Minn. Keynote speaker Martin Larsen will share insights on integrating food-grade oats into regional farming systems, covering agronomic, economic, and market impacts. He will also discuss the formation of the "Oat Mafia," highlighting successes, challenges, and future goals. Following the keynote, participants will join two breakout sessions of their choice. Breakfast pastries and lunch will be provided. **Details: Tuesday, Jan. 27, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Rochester International Event Center.**

[Sign Me Up!](#)



'Rotating into Resiliency' Winter Workshop Series for Crop Producers — Feb. 2026

LSP and U of M Extension are offering a **FREE** "Rotating into Resiliency" winter workshop series during the first three Thursdays of February — **Feb. 5, 12, and 19, from noon to 2 p.m.** This workshop will help participants navigate the agronomic, economic, managerial, and environmental challenges of diversifying their operations.

The three sessions will be offered in a hybrid format — there will be an option to participate **virtually or in-person** at **LSP's offices in Montevideo and Lewiston.**

[Sign Me Up!](#)

Soil Builder Spotlight

LSP Hub Member Receives Leopold Conservation Award

Tom Cotter of Austin, Minn., recently received the 2025 Leopold Conservation Award, which honors farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on working land.

[Read Tom's Story](#)



Upcoming Events

LSP Events

Jan. 27: "Beyond Exports: Rebuilding Local Markets" Winter Workshop. Rochester, Minn.

Feb. 5, 12 & 19: "Rotating into Resiliency" Winter Workshop Series for Crop Producers. virtual or in-person in Montevideo or Lewiston, Minn.

Feb. 26: Soil Health All-Hub Meeting, Hub members only

Partner Events

Dec. 18: Managing Cover Crops Effectively. Saint Charles, Minn.

Dec. 18: Workshop: Sharing No-till Knowledge & Microbial Insights. Rochester, Minn.

Jan. 13: Birds on the Farm: Balancing Biodiversity and Food Safety. virtual, Part of a 10-part series

Jan. 15: Minnesota Neonics Forum. virtual & in-person in Waseca, Minn.

Feb. 3: Beyond the Crop: Birds, Biodiversity, and the Power of Edge Habitat. virtual, part of a 10-part series

[View LSP's Complete Events Calendar](#)

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LSP LONG RANGE PLAN 2025-2030

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

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