



October 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 Bonus Summer!



Last month, legislators from nine states met on Shea-Lynn Ramthun's farm near Cannon Falls, Minn., to discuss the need for access to local markets for oats and other soil-friendly crops. [Learn more below.](#)

As the weather *finally* shifts to lower temps and harvest season winds down, the Land Stewardship Project's Soil Health Team is looking ahead to winter. As many of you know, during the warmer months we are out on farms, facilitating Soil Health Hub meetings, attending field days, and connecting with farmers when it matters most. Cold weather provides time for reflection, appreciation, and looking ahead to the following year.

The Soil Health Team is currently planning our winter workshop and annual Soil Health Hub meeting. These two get-togethers are based on our learnings from all the amazing farmers that we work with throughout the summer months. We're also reflecting on the awesome things we accomplished during the summer of 2025. We facilitated more than 10 [Soil Health Hub](#) meetings around southern Minnesota and northeastern Iowa, connected with hundreds of farmers in person, and pushed hard on a campaign to establish [local oat markets](#) for farmers who are looking to branch out of the corn-soybean rotation. Most importantly, this summer we reaffirmed that listening to farmers matters. When farmer voices are foregrounded, we can make meaningful change for our soil and rural communities.

Wishing you all a happy and plentiful fall season ahead!

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Network News



Birds, Biology & Balance

In the fourth and final installment in LSP's Soil Health Hub sustainability series, we look at how farmers are using the ecological health of their land not only as an indicator of whether they are on the right path when it comes to building soil health in an economically viable manner, but also as a way to make farming a little more enjoyable.

[Read The Article](#)

MN Farmers Share Market Concerns with Legislators

Shea-Lynn Ramthun stood in a recently harvested oat field on her family's farm last month and described to a couple dozen lawmakers a dilemma that's all-too-common in the agriculture business: she had just raised a bumper crop, only to find that she didn't have buyers who will pay a good price.

[Read The Article](#)



Report: Nitrous Oxide — A Hidden Threat

This eye-opening report uncovers how smarter fertilizer strategies and investments in innovation can help producers and farmers cut emissions without compromising productivity.

[Read The Report](#)

Soil Health Survey Winners Announced

Great news! The Soil Health Assessment Survey results are in. Throughout 2024 and 2025, we collected survey data via paper mailings and e-mail to better understand farmer engagement in soil health programs in southeastern Minnesota.

We want to give a big high five to all 540 survey respondents and all of you who contribute to the Soil Builders' Network. It is incredibly fulfilling to see farmer connections building awareness, skills, and resilience in soil health and sustainable agriculture. Thank you all for your energies and dedication to soil health.

Stay tuned for the full results of the survey, which will be unveiled in our December newsletter. We will share insights like: "More than two-thirds of respondents (78%) reported that they use cover crops in some to all possible locations. A majority of respondents also reported using conservation tillage (68%), diversified rotations (57%), and rotational grazing (56%)."

As a way to say "thank you" for taking the survey, participants were automatically entered to win a selection of gift cards from Albert Lea Seed and Patagonia. Without further ado, here are our 10 lucky winners:

- 1) John H. Lubke & Joan Lubke
- 2) Mike Eisenstat & Donna Eisenstat
- 3) Tim Middleton
- 4) Mark Hanson
- 5) Joe Bradley
- 6) Annette Skrukud & Arnold Skrukud
- 7) Kelly Rae Kirkpatrick
- 8) Carmen M. Fernholz & Sally Fernholz
- 9) Dale & Dorothy Zimmerman
- 10) Evelyn A. Ayers

Soil Health Resources



AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant

The AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant (SustAg) supports innovative on-farm research and demonstrations. SustAg projects explore sustainable agriculture practices and systems that could make farming more profitable or resource-efficient. Applications are due by 4 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, Dec. 17.

[Learn More](#)



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program:

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and, in turn, obtain regulatory certainty for a period of 10 years.

[Learn More](#)

Winter Workshops



'Rotating into Resiliency' Winter Workshop Series for Crop Producers

Are you a crop producer interested in integrating small grains into your rotation as a way to build resiliency in the face of increasingly extreme weather, volatile markets, and a sometimes-overwhelming workload?

LSP, in collaboration with U of M Extension, is offering a "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 series will consist of three sessions that will be offered in a hybrid format — there will be an option to participate in-person at LSP's offices in Montevideo and Lewiston, Minn., as well as online.

For more information and to register for this free workshop, see landstewardshipproject.org.

Soil Builder Spotlight

Nikki Meyer — Dorchester, Iowa

A new installment in our series on LSP's Soil Health Hubs features a peek inside a Hub meeting on Nikki Meyer's farm, where she is considering purchasing more land. "How do we make this farmland as profitable as possible?" she asked.

[Read Nikki's Story](#)



Upcoming Events

LSP Events

November 4: [Big Ag, Big Problems: LSP Panel on Rural Consolidation](#), Lanesboro, Minn

Winter 2026: [LSP Farm Transition Workshop](#), virtual

Partner Events

October 18: [Pasture Walk: Real World Tools to Extend the Grazing Season](#), Westby, Wis.

November 4: [Birds in the Balance: Pest Control Services Across Crop Types](#), virtual, part of a 10-lesson series

November 7-8: [Emerging Farmers Conference](#), Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, Minn.

November 14: [Scaling Up Soil Health Strategies Bus Tour](#), Saint Paul, Minn.

December 2: [Integrating Habitat into Croplands: Prairie Strips & Bird Conservation](#), virtual, part of a 10-lesson series

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

LSP's Soil Health Team

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LSP LONG RANGE PLAN 2025-2030
ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

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