



Aaron Bishop speaking at the Niagara Cave tour on July 6th.

Soil Builders' Network Newsletter

August 2022



LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

Successful Start to Summer of Events

The first half of field day season has been a blast so far for the Soil Health Team here at LSP! Since our last newsletter, we have built 10 new [Johnson-Su Bioreactors](#), hosted a [Cave Tour at Niagara Cave](#), had a field day on [small grains with Terry Cunningham](#), held a [pasture walk with Zach Knutson](#), and had a field day on cover crop variations with [Mike Hunnicutt and Jamie Koziolok](#). A jam packed summer and it's only August! We have two events with big name speakers coming up:

Utilizing a [cutting-edge composting system to build soil health and fertility naturally](#) will be the focus of a LSP field day Friday, Aug. 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Dale and Carmene Pangrac-Kim and Andy Olson dairy farm near Lewiston (19300 Trestle Drive). This is a daylong event for farmers interested in learning how to develop a practical system for building good bugs in the soil. Soil microbiology experts David Johnson and Hui-Chun Su Johnson will share how they are using the [Johnson-Su Bioreactor system](#) to practically develop fungal-dense composts that can be applied as a beneficial inoculant to depleted soils. [Sign up here!](#)

Get registered today for LSP's [Regenerative Farming & Grazing Field Days](#) on Aug 17 and 18 with Allen Williams! See, discuss, and go in-depth on soil health and grazing with Williams, a highly experienced regenerative producer and Soil Health Academy consultant. Williams will be hosted on two southeastern Minnesota farms with 5+ years' experience putting soil health principles into practice to grow healthier soil and food, as well as generate profits. Recently, LSP's *Ear to the Ground* podcast released a four-part series featuring Williams talking about regenerative farming practices and their connection to agriculture, ecology, and farm profitability, as well as nutrient density in food products. [Click here to listen to the episodes.](#)

Join us for one or both of the Allen Williams events. No matter what you grow, these field days cover practical ways to improve soil. [For more details and to register, click here.](#)

Don't forget to check out our page of [LSP 40th Anniversary Events](#) for details about our local bonfires, bike tour, square dance, and more!

"The first time I heard one of Allen's presentations, I came away with many new ideas and a heightened inspiration to raise animals in a regenerative way. Taking the leap towards more regenerative style practices has really made a difference in our soil health, animal health, and overall profitability." – Robert Jewell, farmer near Decorah, IA

Soil Health Resources:

• PFI's Grazing Cover Crops Farmer Toolkit

On this page, you'll find resources from PFI and partners covering all things related to grazing cover crops: grazing tools and calculators, how-to guides, video, on-farm research, and more.

• Database has preliminary data on cover crop costs

Farmers across Minnesota now have access to detailed financial information about the profitability of cover crops through FINBIN, the largest publicly available farm financial database in the country.

• The Impact of Grazing Cover Crops on Soil Health

Grazing cover crops is more desirable than mechanical forage harvest when it comes to maintaining soil properties, concludes this study. It finds that the grazing of cover crops can be a viable management option to intensifying no-till crop production when it comes to improving soil health and maintaining or increasing overall system profitability.

• Soil health and nutrient density: preliminary comparison of regenerative and conventional farming

Several independent comparisons indicate regenerative farming practices enhance the nutritional profiles of crops and livestock. Specifically, regenerative farms that combined no-till, cover crops, and diverse rotations produced crops with higher soil organic matter levels, soil health scores, and levels of certain vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals.

• Long-Term Leases Encourage Conservation Efforts

Farmland rental arrangements where tenants may not reap the benefits of conservation investments are a commonly cited barrier to conservation practice adoption in agriculture and result in lower adoption rates on rented land than on owner-operated fields, according to this Iowa study.

Farming Spotlight: Scott and Amanda Holthaus

Scott Holthaus has farmed livestock his whole life. He grew up on the farm near Ossian, Iowa, where he and Amanda recently hosted an LSP pasture walk. From 2007-2019, Scott raised beef cows and sheep in the Mabel and Spring Grove, Minn., area. That farm was sold in 2018, and he then moved back to Iowa. In February 2021, Scott purchased a herd of grass-fed cattle. Today, the Holthaus family raises 100% grass-fed and finished beef, non-GMO fed pastured pork, and non-GMO fed pastured broilers and layers. All products are marketed directly to consumers. Scott and Amanda got interested in regenerative farming in 2019 through their gardening, and then had the chance to gain more experience by attending a Soil Health Academy in 2021. Now they are experimenting with diverse cover crop mixes, fencing, and grazing on cropland.

"Our long term goal is to provide regeneratively-produced nutrient dense foods for our community," say the Holthauses. They also have a goal to share their knowledge and experiences with other producers to build a better community centered on health and happiness. Check out our recent podcast featuring a conversation with Scott: [Ear to the Ground 274: From Dirt to Diversity](#).



Scott Holthaus showing off his soil at a recent LSP pasture walk in Ossian, Iowa.

LSP's Song of the Month: Hugh Masekela - Grazing in the Grass



Upcoming LSP Events (see LSP's web page for more events & updates)

• [Pasture Walk at Sugarloaf Creek Farm, Lake City, MN, Aug. 13, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.](#)

• [Allen Williams Field Day at Bergler Farm, Dakota, MN, Aug. 17, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.](#)

• [Allen Williams Field Day at Meyer Farm, Caledonia, MN, Aug. 18, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.](#)

• [Johnson-Su Bioreactor Field Day at Pangrac Farm, Utica, MN, Aug. 26, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.](#)

• [Field Day with Everett Rolffing and Robb Miller, Lewiston, MN, Sept. 1 a.m. - 1 p.m.](#)

• [Gabe Brown Field Day at Cotter Farm, Austin, MN, Sept 16 & 17](#)

• [Rye Test Plots, Interseeding, Pollinators, and Grazing at Lawler Farm, Eyota, MN, Sept. 30, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.](#)

Check out LSP's Latest Video on Organic Roller Crimping



Interested in getting in touch with other farmers in your area? Want to ask about soil health practices? Let us know what information you're looking for and our soil health team will try to connect you with another farmer in our network.

Get in Touch with a Farmer



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Click here to send us soil health resources or recommend a song for our next newsletter!

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• [LSP Soil Builders' Web Page](#)

• [Main LSP Web Page](#)