



# Improve Water Quality by Using Cover Crops and Other Conservation Systems



Tuesday, March 25, 2014

Two-hour Webcast

Eastern: 1:00p.m.–3:00p.m.

Central: 12:00p.m.–2:00p.m.

Mountain: 11:00a.m.–1:00p.m.

Pacific: 10:00a.m.–12:00p.m.

Join us for a webcast on using cover crops and other conservation systems to improve water quality in agricultural landscapes. Cover crops are plants used to protect and improve the soil on farm fields, especially at times when cash crops such as corn, wheat and soybeans are not being grown. Cover crops can reduce nutrient losses to watersheds by scavenging nitrates that would otherwise be lost to leaching. In addition, cover crops reduce sediment and phosphorus losses to nearby waterways by acting as a vegetative buffer to slow down surface erosion and increase water infiltration. By using cover crops, farmers can provide environmental benefits while also providing other on-farm benefits, including increased soil health, improved water retention, and increased yield. Cover crops are an important conservation practice that can be used in a system of conservation practices to help improve water quality.

This webcast will introduce nutrient cycling and the importance of soil health in agricultural landscape and discuss how systems of conservation practices such as cover crops can help to improve soil nutrient retention and reduce nutrient losses. The webcast will then discuss common cover crop types and highlight a few cover crops that are being used in the Midwest and why farmers are using these cover crop varieties. This webcast will provide basic information on how cover crops and other conservation systems can be used to provide environmental benefits in watersheds across the US.



Top photo: No till corn planted into cover crops  
Bottom photo: Crimson clover, a leguminous cover crop - Photos courtesy of USDA's NRCS

## Instructors:



### **Dr. Hans Kok, Coordinator, Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) –**

Hans coordinates the CCSI which is a program sponsored by the Indiana Conservation Partnership, which promotes a continuous, systematic approach to production agriculture, resulting in improved profitability, soil quality, and water quality on Indiana cropland. Prior to this, Hans was an associate professor at both Washington State University and the University of Idaho covering Extension programming for conservation tillage and bio-energy. He worked as a conservation tillage specialist for Monsanto, and was the state extension specialist for soil and water conservation at Kansas State University. He earned BS and MS degrees from the Agricultural University in The Netherlands, and a PhD from the University of Idaho.



### **Dan Towery, President, Ag Conservation Solutions –**

Since 2005, Dan has operated his crop consulting business from Lafayette, IN where he focuses on continuous no-till, cover crops, nutrient management, and soil health in the Midwest. Prior to this, he worked for NRCS for 26 years including serving as an agronomist for the Conservation Technology Information Center for 10 years, Illinois state agronomist, District Conservationist in two counties, and soil scientist. He also ran a fertilizer plant in Illinois. He has a BS from Western Illinois University and is currently President of the Soil & Water Conservation Society.

**Registration:** You must register in advance to attend this webcast. Register at the Watershed Academy Webcast website at [www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts](http://www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts).

**Note:** Your computer must have the capability of playing sound in order to attend this webcast. To view archived webcasts, go to [www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts](http://www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts)

**Questions?** Please contact Amber Siegel at [amber.siegel@tetrattech.com](mailto:amber.siegel@tetrattech.com).

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