

Contact: Marie Flanagan, NCR SARE Communications Specialist
120 BAE, Univ. of Minnesota | 1390 Eckles Ave. | St. Paul, MN 55108
ph. 612.625.7027 | f. 612.626.3132 | mart1817@umn.edu

Grazing Livestock on Cover Crops in Double or Relay Cropping Systems, Post-Weaning

Project Titles: Grazing Livestock on Cover Crops in Double or Relay Cropping Systems, Post-Weaning

Coordinators: Michael Ostlie

Location: Carrington, North Dakota

SARE Grants: \$199,995

Duration: 2016-2018

To read the full project reports, go to <https://projects.sare.org/> and search for project number LNC18-412.

In the Northern Great Plains states, livestock typically eat harvested forages, coproducts, and grains in a drylot for two-to-six months, post weaning, until they enter the feedlot for finishing. What if, instead of using this backgrounding strategy, producers grazed their livestock on cover crops in double or relay cropping systems post-weaning?

Mike Ostlie says it could help farmers decrease feed costs and improve soil health. Ostlie, a Carrington Research Extension Center Agronomist with North Dakota State University, received SARE-support to seed cover crops into an existing crop rotation for fall and winter grazing as an alternative to drylot backgrounding.

While the benefits of incorporating cover crops into cropping systems are more well known, Ostlie says a lack of research studies on the benefits of cover crops in a cover crop/livestock integrated system are less known.

Working with local farmers, Ostlie hopes to show that with proper management,

North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education strengthens rural communities, increases farmer / rancher profitability, and improves the environment by supporting research and education. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed within this product do not necessarily reflect the view of the SARE program or the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Michael Ostlie used a flex 71 planter and an offset 3 point bracket to plant a grazing mix of barley and rye into corn in July 2019.

crop production and fall grazing can occur on the same field, during the same growing season, with positive results for both the crop and the livestock.

The project is still ongoing, but as a North Dakota native, Ostlie is hopeful that he can reduce feeding costs and increase soil health for producers in his home state.