



Managing Production and Financial Risks in Northern Climates through Cover Crop Adoption

The interest in cover crops among dairy and livestock farmers in **Vermont** has increased markedly over the past few years. Cover cropping is a practice that can mitigate production and financial risks as these crops help increase soil health, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and ultimately save farmers money on fertilizer and feed. However, successfully integrating cover crops into existing corn silage production systems takes advanced planning and critical timing decisions around planting and termination.

To increase successful adoption of cover cropping, a team led by **Dr. Heather Darby** with **University of Vermont Extension** developed a project that provided research-based information on best practices for cover

cropping in silage corn for northern climates. Delivery methods included a statewide conference, two on-farm field days, two YouTube videos, and a webinar series.

As a result of the project, 598 livestock farmers and service providers gained a better understanding of cover crop best practices, and 40 farmers planned to implement at least one best practice to better manage their production and the financial risks. During the project, the UVM Extension team worked closely with 14 farms to design, implement, and monitor cover cropping on over 1,500 acres. These farms adopted new cover cropping and monitoring practices to document benefits of this practice on their farms compared to no cover cropping. New practices included seeding timing, seeding methods, species selection, termination methods, and in-season nitrogen monitoring.

The team was also able to significantly extend the project's reach by posting their webinar series and the two videos on YouTube. At the close of the project, analytics indicated that more than 2,415 had already viewed the recordings. These webinars and videos are valuable resources that continue to be available to farmers seeking assistance with the implementation of cover cropping.



"I love the idea of farmers teaching farmers about this stuff. I think they can visualize the potential better – it makes it seem more doable."

- Agricultural service provider





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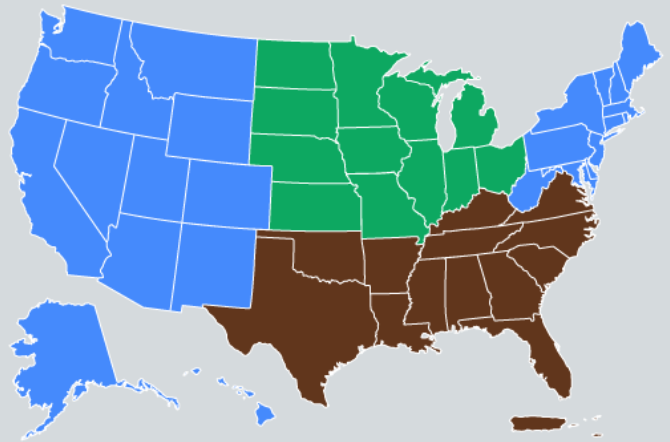
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**“Educating America’s farmers and ranchers
to manage the unique risks of producing food
for the world’s table.”**

Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website. <http://ExtensionRME.org>



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