KANSAS
Soil Health
ALLIANCE

KSSOILHEALTH.ORG

Improving and protecting Kansas soils through farmer and rancher led education and resources.

Upcoming Events

Kansas Soil Health Alliance Events Calendar

As we head into November, we encourage you to keep an eye on our event list in order to start planning for future conferences. Many winter conferences have been added to our website, and additional dates and details will be added as they are announced. Our website's events calendar contains all local and virtual events we find that are talking about soil health. There are a variety of great conferences and workshops to help expand your soil health knowledge and grow your peer network. Take time now to review the calendar and plan your next learning experience!

Do you know of an event that isn't on the calendar?
Contact Joanna@KSsoilhealth.org to get it added.
Upcoming Events – Kansas Soil Health Alliance (kssoilhealth.org)

Kansas Soil Health Partnership Forum

Join us in 2026 as we continue our monthly webinar series. "The Kansas Soil Health Partnership Forum," is a monthly one-hour webinar hosted by the Kansas Soil Health Alliance featuring farmers, ranchers, educators, and ag professionals providing insightful views and sharing personal experiences on how they are working to improve and protect Kansas's soils. It will be held via Zoom on the last Thursday of the month from noon to 1pm.

Due to the holidays, we will not be hosting the webinar in November or December. However, we are making plans for speakers and topics in 2026. Stay tuned for more information and use this link to register for all of next year's webinars.

In the meantime, you can find all of the 2025 webinar recordings by visiting the Resources Section of our website.

Here is a list of topics & speakers from this year:

- February- Dr. Gretchen Sassenrath: Soils of Kansas
- March- Marlon Winger: CEMA 204 Program
- April- Dr. Lance Gunderson: Interpretation of the Haney Soil Test
- May- Candy Thomas: Nutrient Cycling in a Soil Health Management System
- June- Ryan O'Neill & Bill Buessing: Tuttle Creek Reservoir WRAPS Program and Local Farmer Partnerships
- July- Jerry Hatfield & Kevin Morrill: Measuring the Effect of Biological Amendments on Pastures Through Kansas-Wide On-Farm Research
- August- Brooklyn Armijo: Nitrates in Groundwater
- September- Brady Burks: Practical Applications of Drones in Agriculture
- October- Brian Rast: Nature-Based Solutions and Modeling

Conservation District Events

Many local conservation districts are planning a variety of events this year. Here are some events that may be in your area:

- Farmer to Farmer Discussions: These are designed to be casual, farmer led discussions about water and soil conservation practices and topics.

- Management Unit events: These are collaborative events discussing soil health topics hosted by several conservation districts working together.

Each conservation district's discussion schedule is different. To learn more about your local conservation district's meeting schedule, you can contact the office and/or follow them on Facebook. Unsure which conservation district you are in? Look here: Conservation Districts | Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (kacd.net)

Soil Health Opportunities

Attention Ag Lenders!

Are you an Ag Lender or do you know an Ag Lender who would like to connect with other Ag Lenders to discuss soil health topics? If so, contact us and we'll help you get in touch with others like you!

Attention Soil Health Bucket Owners!

We have made some updates to the instructions that accompany our Soil Health Buckets. If you would like to be emailed an updated copy of the instructions, contact Jennifer at jennifer@KSsoilhealth.org.

Conservation Connector tool

The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) has unveiled a new tool, the *Conservation Connector*. By providing transparent access to incentive opportunities and direct contact with local support, the *Conservation Connector* (Connector.ag) aims to be a trusted, one-stop shop for producers looking to implement or expand soil health and conservation management practices.
The tool features a searchable directory that allows users to filter programs by crop

type, conservation practice, and geographic region, offering a customized experience that matches producers with programs that fit their operation.

Kansas Grazing Exchange

The Kansas Grazing Exchange helps match available forage with livestock producers for mutually beneficial grazing relationships. If you have available grazing or you're looking for grazing, consider posting a listing. It's free and easy to use.

Kansas Grazing Exchange – Kansas Soil Health Alliance (kssoilhealth.org)

"No-Till Farmer" magazine subscription opportunity

The Conservation Ag Foundation, founded in January 2024 is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on equipping farmers with the knowledge and tools to adopt conservation agriculture practices such as no-till, strip-till, and cover cropping. These practices enhance soil health, protect water quality, and ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture.

As part of this initiative, Kansas Soil Health Alliance has been awarded a scholarship from the Conservation Ag Foundation (CAF) in partnership with "No-Till Farmer," providing our members a FREE 1-year subscription to "No-Till Farmer" magazine. To claim your complimentary 12-issue subscription, please complete this form to confirm your eligibility.

FarmTender

This new service helps match farmers using regenerative practices with willing landowners. Go to www.FarmTender.us to learn more. It is free to browse, and, for a nominal annual fee, you can register and read the profiles of landowners and their land parcels, or of regenerative farmers, or post one yourself!

Kansas State University Survey on Cover Crops

K-STATE Research and Extension

CCTA

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Kansas State University, in collaboration with the Colorado Conservation Tillage Association (CCTA) and the Kansas Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) have created a survey evaluating the use of cover crops in the semi-arid Great Plains region. Your insights will help researchers develop innovative projects and publications exploring how cover crops affect soil health and crop productivity.
For questions regarding information in this survey, please feel free to contact Dr. Augustine Obour (KSU Soil Scientist) at 785-625-3425 ext. 215 or abour@ksu.edu and Dr. Logan Simon (KSU Southwest Area Agronomist) at 620-276-8286 or lsimon@ksu.edu.
To complete the survey, click here.
This survey is not associated with the Kansas Soil Health Alliance.

Cornell University Survey on Rye

A team of researchers at Cornell University has created a survey to understand the many ways farmers are growing and using cereal rye, including for grain, forage, and as a cover crop. Their team is also developing new rye varieties and want to understand important breeding priorities for different end uses. Participation is

voluntary. At the end of this project, research results will be shared through presentations, published in peer-reviewed publications, and shared with stakeholders via a white paper and farmer/industry publications.
For more information about the research, contact the project leader, Virginia Moore at vm377@cornell.edu.
To complete the survey, click here.
This survey is not associated with the Kansas Soil Health Alliance.

Job Opportunities

Conservation Jobs in Kansas

There are various open positions at county conservation districts around the state as well as positions with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Currently, the USDA-NRCS is under a hiring freeze. Once lifted, all vacancy announcements for USDA positions can be found online at usajobs.gov.

Featured openings:

- Conservation District/Watershed District Manager in Butler County. Click the link below for more information.
- Conservation District Manager in Cowley County. Click the link below for more information.

You can learn about additional positions here.
https://www.kacd.net/jobs.cfm

Additional Opportunities

- Kansas Rural Center website features a collection of educational and career opportunities curated to suit those in Kansas interested in agriculture, ecology, and community building. Visit the KRC website for more information.

- Visit the Human Resources page for employment opportunities at the Kansas Department of Agriculture.
- Missouri Department of Agriculture is hiring for several positions. Visit their website to search for available opportunities.

Featured Stories

How to Graze Cover Crops for Healthier Soil and Profitable Farms

(Photo by Brent Pringnitz, Iowa State University Extension)

Cover Crop Grazing

Cover crops are planted in between cash crop seasons and are a great tool for improving soil health and preventing erosion.

To take your cover crops and soil health to the next level, you can graze cattle on them. In this case, cover crops are planted with the intention of feeding cattle fresh nutrients and fertilizing soil rather than being harvested.

How It's Done

Start by asking yourself these questions:

- **What are your goals?** Is soil health your primary driver? Cattle health? Do you want to avoid hauling manure during certain seasons? This can help you make decisions down the road.
- **Do you have any constraints?** For example, what is the last possible day you can plant your cash crop? Or do you have a landlord with specific needs or requests?
- **What resources will I need?** Livestock need water, fencing, and more. It is also important to get help from agronomists, veterinarians, and other experts. We'll walk you through some of these resources in the next section.

What To Plan For

To get started, consider the following costs.

Exterior Fencing

This fencing will be a little more sturdy than interior fencing. It surrounds the exterior of the field or entire section you want to graze. To prevent issues, also make sure the grass is always greener on the cattle side of the fence!

Interior Fencing

Cross fencing can be used to gradually graze across the field. You can limit the cattle's movement during rain events, force them to eat the cover crop at a certain development point, and prevent overgrazing any particular area.

Water

If you can, consider adding a 1-inch water line to a portable tank. You can also haul water as needed.

Cover Crop Seed

Cereal rye is a popular choice. Remember, once it hits the reproductive stage, nutritional value is lower. You will need more seed per acre than a field that is not grazed. A knowledgeable cover crop seed salesman can help you with a good mix.

Salt And Mineral

You might need more mineral or salt, which is critical to growth and reproduction. We recommend talking with your veterinarian about this.

Termination Method

Chemical or roller crimping termination have different costs and pros and cons.

We recommend working with your local USDA office, conservation agronomist, sales agronomist, cover crop dealer, and veterinarian for the most up-to-date expert guidance and recommendations.

FAQ

Benefits:

- Reduced feed cost – Farmers saved on average $3,851 per year on total mixed ration (TMR) according to a 2021 study.
- Increased farm profitability – Farmers in the same study who planted rye between soy and corn profited on average $73.52 per acre.
- Increased land efficiency – Land gets used more effectively year-round.
- Improved soil health – Grazing cover crops increases organic matter in the soil as well as improves soil structure, reducing erosion.
- Improved nutrient management – The increased organic matter in the soil improves its ability to retain nutrients. Additionally, the livestock naturally deposit manure on the soil, reducing the need for commercial fertilizer.
- Hay later.
- Don't have to haul manure as much.
- Planting green can smother out weeds.

Challenges & Risks To Mitigate:

- Takes time and effort to manage cattle rotations and hauling water.
- Cover crop application method if you don't have a drill because you need the cover crop planted early.
- Wet, muddy weather can cause uneven ground, which can affect cash crop planting.
- Making sure cattle are getting the right nutrients.
- Compaction?
- Upfront cost.

Source: Iowa Water Agriculture Alliance