

Soil Conservation Award



One of this year's winners of the Soil Conservation Award is Bush & Sons Land & Cattle, LLC for their use of cover crops in their farming operation.

The basis of selection of individual awardees was determined on the following points:

- a. Use of land according to its capabilities.
- b. Completeness of conservation plan.
- c. Balance of farm enterprise.
- d. Quality of conservation work completed and maintenance of practices.
- e. Special Practices: In addition to traditional practices, special practices such as grassland development, forestry, pollution abatement, riparian management, water quality, and residue management should be considered.

According to Lex, their operation began using cover crops in 2010 as a way to promote soil health by increasing the diversity in the soil biology. Along with improving the soil health, they also wanted to help with water infiltration.

Currently they are running around 900 acres of their own land with cover crops, along with more acreage on other landowners. Some of the covers they are using include safflower, oats, winter peas, and various mixes. These covers are incorporated into their rotations of wheat, milo, and corn. Most of these covers are either left for winter kill or sprayed prior to June 1st for insurance purposes.

The biggest benefits they have seen from the use of the cover crops so far has been keeping the soil covered and protected from the wind and heat. Along with protection, they have seen weed suppression, and the living roots in the soil have improved the soil biology.