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Videos: Farmers Can Benefit from Grazing on Row Crop Land

Ten videos on Forever Green site feature farmers talking about re-integrating livestock grazing

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Benefits of grazing in row crop country include utilizing winter cover crops following row crops, soil health improvement, and improving productivity of marginal land converted from row crops to pastures. That is important, George Boody noted because: “Over 20% of the land in the corn belt can be considered ‘marginal’ in economic or ecological terms. Some of this marginal land is perfectly suited for reintegration of cattle.”

“There are barriers that prevent farmers from adopting continuous living cover (CLC) practices on their land,” said Boody. “Willingness to experiment is important, but farmers also need relationships with other farmers and landowners, technical support, policy changes that favor CLC and grazing livestock integration, markets for their product, and financial resources for infrastructure.”

[Ten videos feature farm family's stories of re-integrating grazing livestock in row crop country:](#)

- [Blackwelder County Line Dairy](#)--Brett Blackwelder tried out grazing of pregnant heifers as a potential new enterprise to diversify their dairy and row crop farm.
- [Experienced Farmers Aid the Petersons to Get Started](#)--Luke and Ali Peterson integrate grass-fed livestock on the rented organic crop farm where Carmen and Sally Fernholz are retiring, with the advice and cattle from the Forbords.
- [A-Frame Farm: Integrating Grazing in an Organic Row Cropping System](#)--Luke Peterson and Carmen Fernholz discuss how and why they are integrating ruminant grazing, including on Kernza®.
- [Forbords Prairie Horizon Farm](#)--Luverne and Mary Jo illustrate the benefits of shifting marginal row crop land to lush pastures
- [J Ace Farm, Erdahls and Alfords](#)--Matt Alford discusses benefits from cover crops and whether to integrate grazing to the family's row crop operation in southern Minnesota.
<https://youtu.be/pxLNnxB3jQ8>

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- [Linder Family Farms and Cattle](#)--Andy tells us about late fall contract grazing of cows on cover crops following row crops or small grains on his family's southern Minnesota farm.
- [Seversons Grand View Beef](#)--Beth and Troy, and Knute and Amanda explain how integration of perennial crops, grazing a cow calf herd and managed rotational grazing of grass finished steers in row crop country can provide extra income that allows the next generation to farm and ranch, and convert land to a longer rotation in Iowa corn country.
- [Simons Lakeside Prairie Farm](#)--Bryan and Jessie discuss the benefits and challenges of managed rotational grazing of their grass finished herd on pastures converted from marginal row crop land in western Minnesota.
- [VanDerPols Pastures A Plenty](#)--Grandparents, Jim and Lee Ann talk about transitioning organic farming with managed rotational grazing on pastures in western Minnesota to grandchild, Andrew.
- [Volsen Farm and Cattle](#)--Eric relays the benefits his family have experienced from moving his cow-calf herd from drylot to grazing on row crop land after cover crops and a longer rotation with small grains and cover crops.

Beyond these videos, a preliminary feasibility study will develop recommendations for policy makers and researchers regarding ways to encourage more farmers to integrate grazing ruminants in row crop country. This work was funded through Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture's Endowed Chair in Agricultural Systems (<http://misadocuments.info/EndowedChair/endowed.html>)