



EDUCATION THAT DELIVERS: MEASURABLE GAINS IN CONSERVATION PRACTICE ADOPTION AND FARM PLANNING

128,575

readers accessing team-written articles on cover crops

127,506

readers accessing team-written articles on soil health

PRIORITY

A R E A S

Farmers and agricultural professionals face challenges in adopting conservation practices, improving profitability and managing production systems. Barriers include limited technical knowledge, short growing seasons and lack of practical tools. Military veterans entering agriculture also need targeted support to build business and production skills. These challenges impact farm profitability, soil health and water quality in the Great Lakes region.

IMPACTS

By equipping farmers, veterans and agricultural professionals with practical tools and research-based knowledge, MSU Extension strengthens farm profitability, promotes soil health and supports conservation practices that protect water quality. These efforts contribute to long-term farm viability and environmental sustainability across the region.



70%

of participants planned to change management practices at the Monroe County Farmer's Day



80%

of participants reported they are very likely to use what they learned at the Veteran Conference



84%

of attendees applied course knowledge learned at Cover Crop Essentials course



37%

of attendees built new professional connections at the Cover Crop Essentials course

DELIVERING PROGRAMS THAT IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE AND ADOPTION OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES



Photo credit: The Ohio State University

In 2025, Michigan State University Extension led multiple initiatives to address these challenges. The Cover Crop Essentials course trained agricultural professionals through online lectures, test plots and expert-led discussions.

Cover Crop Essentials: 122 participants from 11 states and Manitoba; estimated farmer reach of 3,725. 84% applied course knowledge; 37% built new professional connections.

MSU Extension partnered internationally to host a webinar on interseeding cover crops using unmanned aerial vehicles.

International webinar: 19 live attendees; 273 recording views.

A Monroe County Farmer's Day featured live demonstrations.

Monroe County Farmer's Day: 36 attendees; 70% planned to change management practices.

The Inaugural Military Veteran Farming Conference brought together over 100 veterans and partners from four states, featuring MSU Extension's new Planning for Profit workshop and sessions on soil health, cover crops and forage profitability.

Veteran Conference: 37 veterans attended Planning for Profit; 80% reported they are very likely to use what they learned; 60% reported significant knowledge gain.

Additionally, a hands-on cover crop workshop in Tuscola County engaged producers in biomass sampling and analysis to improve decision-making.

Cover Crop Workshop: 22 participants from 14 counties; attendees reported increased confidence in estimating biomass and revising cover crop goals.

“*Seeing everyone's results from different parts of the country was very cool.*”

Cover Crop Essentials Course attendee

“*I am glad to have more foundational knowledge of cover crops that I have already been able to use while writing conservation plans.*”

Cover Crop Essentials Course attendee
