

# Cover crops are making a comeback

By **ANDY KARRICK**  
**SWCD Resource Conservationist**

The use of cover crops has been around for years. It has come back into fashion as of late due to the benefits it provides.

While the almighty dollar still rules most decisions on the farm, spending a little more on the use of cover crops has been paying big dividends. There are many ways cover crops can help.

If you are looking for a way to boost up the available nitrogen to your corn, you could plant a legume cover crop such as crimson clover or red clover.

If you have a problem with compaction, there are crops that have a large taproot like tillage radishes.

If you are looking for a natural way to control annual weeds, crops like rye, wheat, sorghum-sudangrass, cowpeas and buckwheat produce a lot of biomass that can help.

Aside from the direct benefits to your crops, planting cover crops also reduce both wind and water erosion, improve soil health, there is the potential of improved yields over time, increase earthworm populations, improved soil microbiology, help build organic matter, provide excellent grazing opportunities over winter and they can both provide nutrients and scavenge nutrients and keep them from leaching away.

By having more earthworms, you would have better soil aeration, more soil porosity, better incorporation of organic matter and increased nutrient recycling.

Now of course it does cost to plant cover crops, but the seed is fairly inexpensive.

The way that you plant them will depend on what you plant. Some of the crops can be

aerial seeded before the cash crop is harvested. This can run around \$12-15 per acre (consult with your aerial applicators).

Other crops can be drilled or broadcast into the field after your crops are harvested.

Soil Health is something that most people take for granted and few do anything about. Cover crops improve the health of the soil and are a simple step in the right direction to improve the health of the planet.

To learn more about cover crops, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District / NRCS office.

# 'Farmer's Share' Breakfast Saturday in L'town

*A full breakfast for 61¢?*

*Read here why!*

To help celebrate Agriculture Week and to recognize farmers and their contribution to our county, Fulton County Farm Bureau Volunteers are hosting a Farmer's Share Breakfast on Saturday,

March 24.

The breakfast runs from 7 a.m., to 10 a.m., at the Fulton County Farm Bureau Building in Lewistown.

The cost has been set at 61 cents which represents the farmer's share of income for the commodities used in the meal.

The menu for the breakfast will be bacon, toast, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, orange juice, milk and coffee.

**Spring**

**BACK INTO SHAPE**

**at the Clayberg!**

**Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapies**

**We have a state-of-the-art therapy program with personalized plans to get you home sooner.**

**Medicaid & Medicare Accepted**

**We also offer Respite Care - let us be there for you!**

**COME DISCOVER** quality rehabilitation services right in your backyard!

**The Clayberg**

- Delicious Meals
- 24 Hour Skilled Nursing
- Therapy Services
- Resident Outings, Shopping and Entertainment Trips

625 E. Monroe, Cuba (309) 785-5012 • [www.clayberg.org](http://www.clayberg.org)

Call 309-785-5012 for a consultation or for more information!

**Fulton County's Home for Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation**

## About the Democrat's Farm Tab

We are pleased to present to our readers the 2018 Farm Focus tab.

This section is provided to all subscribers in Mason and Fulton counties, reaching nearly 7,000 homes.

Like all of our special sections, we make every effort to provide locally written stories about people our readers know and places they've been to.

While we generated many of the stories ourselves, we are grateful for the assistance of many contributors from the Farm Bureau, University of Illinois Extension, Soil and Water Conservation Service, and more.

We hope you enjoy this special section

