

Program Overview **Tuesday, December 16**

All talks are in the Kilimanjaro Ballroom unless otherwise noted.



2025

Kalahari Resort,
Wisconsin Dells

9:00 – 9:30	REGISTRATION		
9:30 – 9:45	Welcome		
9:45 – 10:45	Keynote – Nutrient Loss Reduction: We Need All Available Practices <i>Speaker: Dr. Matt Helmers, Professor/Director, Iowa Nutrient Research Center, Iowa State University</i>		
10:45 – 11:00	BREAK		
11:00 – 12:00	Breakout Room C Making Decisions from Soil Health Test Results <i>Speakers: Chris Bandura (Extension), Joe Ailts (Independent Crop Consultant), Anna Cates (University of Minnesota)</i> <i>Moderator: Landon Baumgartner</i>	Breakout Room F Fundamentals to Innovation: How to Reduce Nitrate Leaching <i>Speakers: Kevin Masarik (UW-Stevens Point), Jim Hebbe (Farmer)</i> <i>Moderator: Guolong Liang</i>	Breakout Room D Precision Ag and Conservation Technology on a Budget <i>Speakers: Adam Igli (Farmer), Tom Novak (Independent Crop Consultant), Lucas Niebur (Farmer)</i> <i>Moderator: Sam Bibby</i>
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH – Weather Weirdness and Soil Health <i>Speaker: Steve Vavrus, Director and State Climatologist, Wisconsin State Climatology Office</i>		
1:00 – 2:00	Farmer Keynotes – “It’s the Little Things” “Balancing Act” <i>Speakers: Ken Kayhart, David Trimner</i>		
2:00 – 3:00	Poster session – Highlighting innovative efforts by our producer-led groups <i>Networking with milk and cookies provided.</i>		
3:00 – 4:00	Breakout Room C Diving Deeper Into Tile Drainage <i>Speakers: Matt Helmers (Iowa State University), Margaret Zimmer (UW-Madison), Duane Ducat (Farmer)</i> <i>Moderator: Laura Paletta</i>	Breakout Room F From Soil to Stomach: Leveraging Cover Crops for Forage <i>Speakers: Bill Powel-Smith (LandCares LLC), Marta Kohmann (UW-Madison), Roger Bindl (Farmer)</i> <i>Moderator: Anastasia Kurth</i>	Breakout Room D Manure Breakout: Keeping Nutrients and Soil Out of Water <i>Speakers: Kevin Erb (UW-Madison Extension), Ashley Muench (UW-Green Bay), Davina Bonness (Kewaunee County Soil and Water Department), Lee Kinnard (Farmer)</i> <i>Moderator: Chris Clark</i>
4:00 – 5:30	Roundtable discussions		
5:30	ADJOURN		

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Program Overview **Wednesday, December 17**

All talks are in the Kilimanjaro Ballroom unless otherwise noted.

7:30 – 8:45

BREAKFAST – 25 YEARS OF PRODUCER-LED RESEARCH WITH DISCOVERY FARMS *

8:45 – 10:00

Keynote – All Hands on Deck: What Every Sector Can Do to Grow Cover Crops

Speaker: **Dr. Anna Cates**, Associate Extension Professor/State Soil Health Specialist, University of Minnesota

10:00 – 11:00

Breakout Room C
Advancing Conservation Through Farmer-Led Research

Speakers: **Joe Bragger** (Farmer)
Lindsey Hartfiel (Discovery Farms)
Ellen Albright (Discovery Farms)

Moderator: **Sheri Schwert**

11:15 – 12:15

Breakout Room C
Advancing Conservation Through Farmer-Led Research: Part 2

Speakers: **Nick Dallmann** (Farmer)
Pat Socha (Farmer)
Marty Weiss (Farmer)

Moderator: **Abby Augarten**

12:15 – 1:00

LUNCH

1:00 – 2:00

Farmer Panel – Scaling Conservation Using Producer-Led Efforts

Panelists: **Jeff Hadachek, Mark Gutierrez, and Stefan Gailans**

2:00

CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURN

Breakout Room F
Journey of Phosphorus

Speakers: **Laura Paletta** (UW-Madison Extension)
Francisco Arriaga (UW-Madison)
Steve Hoffman (Independent Crop Consultant)

Moderator: **Chris Clark**

Breakout Room D
Is Your Relationship with Cover Crops Feeling Boring or Stagnant?

Speakers: **Andy Bensend** (Farmer)
Dan Andersen (Iowa State University)

Moderator: **Jerry Clark**

Breakout Room D
Managing Cereal Rye for Weed Suppression and Soil Health in Wisconsin Grain Production

Speakers: **Chris Baxter** (UW-Platteville)
Josh Kamps (UW-Madison Extension)

Moderator: **Dane Elmquist**

* Open to all attendees. Presentations start at 7:45.
If arriving later please minimize the disturbance.

Tuesday, December 16

9:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Keynote – Nutrient Loss Reduction: We Need All Available Practices (1 CM CEU)

States within the Mississippi River Basin are actively working to reduce the loss of nutrients to downstream waters. The scale of change on the landscape to reach these goals is extremely large and will require a range of practices. Fortunately, there are many practices farmers can use on their land, but we need to think about where they can be placed to have the greatest impact. This presentation will highlight the range of practices that can be used to reduce nutrient loss and the scale of change that is needed.

Speaker: **Dr. Matt Helmers**, Professor/Director, Iowa Nutrient Research Center, Iowa State University

11:00 a.m. – Noon

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 (concurrent talks)

Breakout Room C

Making Decisions from Soil Health Test Results (1 SW CEU)

Soil health testing has been a tool available to farmers in various forms for multiple years now. The challenge remains determining how to objectively act on the information these results provide. Speakers in this session will explore results from a statewide collaborative soil health benchmarking project aiming to provide WI farmers and agronomists with context as to how different soil health indicators are affected by inherent soil properties and field management. Hear how farmers in NW WI see value in their soil health test results, and from University of Minnesota's Soil Health Specialist on observed relationships between crop performance and soil health measurements on Minnesota's soils.

Speakers: **Chris Bandura** (UW-Madison Extension)

Joe Ailts (Ailts Agronomy)

Anna Cates (University of Minnesota)

Moderator: **Landon Baumgartner** (UW-Madison Extension)

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch: Weather Weirdness and Soil Health (0.5 CM CEU)

How is our warmer and wetter climate with increasingly erratic weather patterns affecting water quality and soil health? We have been facing a number of climatic challenges recently, including record warm temperatures, heavier storm events, and greater precipitation variability. This presentation will document these weather trends and describe how they provide motivation for agricultural resilience strategies.

Speaker: **Steve Vavrus**, Director and State Climatologist, Wisconsin State Climatology Office

Tuesday, December 16

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Farmer Keynotes (1 CM CEU)

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS Crop farming in today's world is very challenging and requires attention to detail. It is no different as you introduce conservation practices into an operation. I have had the privilege of farming my whole life alongside very gifted farmers who pioneer in conservation and care strongly for water quality. I hope to share with everyone a collective knowledge of what we have learned together over the years. Diversity is key and so is attention to detail. We don't have it all figured out but we have learned some things along the way and I hope to share that knowledge with you. I hope that you are inspired to try something new and maybe even do some things that are old to better your operation and understanding of regenerative farming in a row crop setting. (Speaker: **Ken Kayhart**, Kayhart Farms)

THE BALANCING ACT Hear from a Wisconsin dairy farmer about the successes and failures of implementing new and unique practices on his farm. Trying to balance the two goals of sustainable ag and a productive and profitable herd on the heavy soils of north-central Wisconsin prove to be a journey of learning over more than a decade. (Speaker: **David Trimmer**, Miltrim Farms)

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Poster session: Highlighting innovative efforts by our producer-led groups

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 (concurrent talks)

Breakout Room C

Diving Deeper Into Tile Drainage (1 SW CEU)

Breakout Room F

Fundamentals to Innovation: How to Reduce Nitrate Leaching (1 SW CEU)

Nitrogen can leach below the crop rooting zone if it's not managed properly, causing contamination in drinking water and loss in farm profitability. In this session, we will learn from Dr. Kevin Masarik about the fundamentals of nitrate leaching, how to set reasonable goals to reduce nitrogen loss, and from Jim Hebbe from Green Lake about innovative on-farm trials in achieving his nitrogen management and environment goals.

Speakers: **Kevin Masarik** (UW-Stevens Point) **Jim Hebbe** (Farmer)

Moderator: **Guolong Liang** (UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room D

Precision Ag and Conservation Technology on a Budget (1 CM CEU)

Precision ag technology has many benefits on the farm. In this session we aim to discuss how we can use precision ag for conservation and keep it cost friendly. We will go over some DIY solutions for auto-steer, talk about where you might find the best ROI and cover specific ways to use precision ag for conservation.

Speakers: **Adam Igl** (Farmer) **Tom Novak** (Independent Crop Consultant) **Lucas Niebur** (Farmer)

Moderator: **Sam Bibby** (UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room F

From Soil to Stomach: Leveraging Cover Crops for Forage (1 CM CEU)

The use of tile drainage in Wisconsin is growing. Tile can help dry out a wet field, yet there are water quality concerns with increased nitrates in water discharging from the tile outlet. This session will dive deeper into how tile impacts water movement in the landscape, share data on how bioreactors and other conservation practices impact nutrient losses, and discuss considerations when choosing which practices fit your operation.

Speakers: **Matt Helmers** (Iowa State University) **Margaret Zimmer** (UW-Madison) **Duane Ducat** (Farmer, Deer Run Dairy)

Moderator: **Laura Paletta** (UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room D

Manure Breakout: Keeping Nutrients and Soil Out of Water (1 SW CEU)

In the manure breakout three experts will share history, research and experiences with different practices which have helped manage manure, reduce runoff, and keep soil and manure nutrients out of surface and drinking water.

Speakers: **Kevin Erb** (UW-Madison Extension) **Ashley Muench** (UW-Green Bay) **Davina Bonness** (Kewaunee County Soil and Water Department)

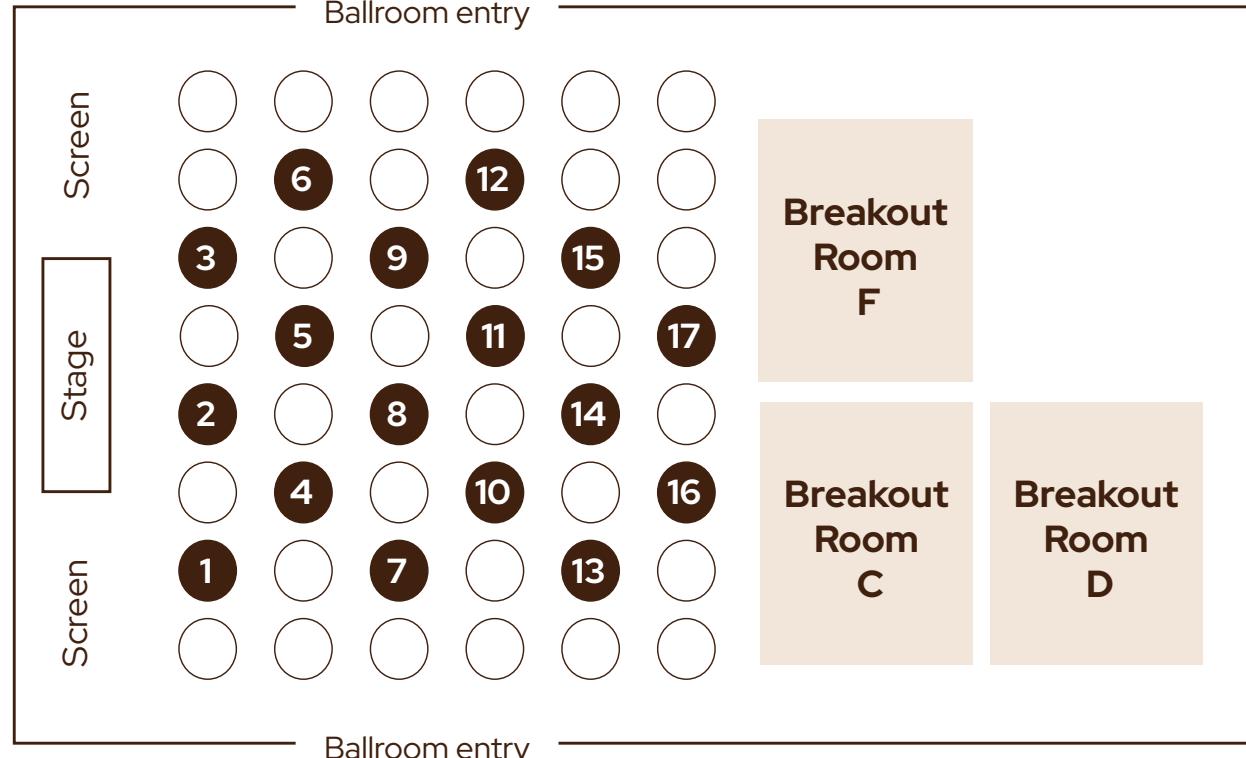
Lee Kinnard (Farmer, Kinnard Farms)

Moderator: **Chris Clark** (UW-Madison Extension)

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Roundtables

Rotate through tables featuring farmers and industry experts to workshop solutions to challenges, ask questions and engage in conversation about topics including manure composting, innovative seeding equipment, and the economics of soil health practices. You have the option to attend two roundtables. (See page 6 for details and map)



Roundtable topics and table numbers

- 1 Wisconsin's neonicotinoid workgroup (AJ Jeninga)
- 2 DNR nutrient loss reduction strategy project update (Joe Bonnell)
- 3 Wisconsin's weather, climate, and farmers (Ashley Cate, Steve Vavrus, Josh Bendorf)
- 4 Food grade (non-small) grain production in WI (Graham Adsit)
- 5 Phosphorus losses and soil health (Steven Hall)
- 6 Camelina (Will Fullwider, Sam Bibby, Anastasia Kurth)
- 7 Biologicals (Dan Marzu, Jim Hebbe)
- 8 Economic policy update for farmers (Paul Mitchell)
- 9 Farm succession – multigenerational approach (Joy Kirkpatrick)
- 10 Insect management in conservation cropping systems (Laura Flandermeyer, Jordan Kampa, and Emily Bick)
- 11 Biochar use in WI (Rebecca Larson)
- 12 Weed management strategies for conservation cropping systems (Josh Kamps)
- 13 Interseeding trial work and results from 2025 PLWG (Steven Hall)
- 14 SNAP Plus in 2025 and beyond (Hava Blair)
- 15 Quantifying pasture metrics for optimal production (Melissa Ohlrich)
- 16 Pests and partners: managing insects in conservation cropping systems (Dane Elmquist)
- 17 Choose the best way to quantify leaching on your farm (Guolong Liang)

Wednesday, December 17

7:30 – 8:45 a.m.

Breakfast - 25 Years of Producer-Led Research with Discovery Farms (0.5 SW CEU)

Over breakfast we will bridge the past and the present through the story of the formation, evolution, and impact of the Discovery Farms Program through the past 25 years. We will cover challenges, successes, critical partnerships, and how this relates to our current day conditions. Overall, you'll leave with a renewed sense of the value of participating in on-farm research, no matter which seat at the table you're in.

Panelists: **Dennis Frame** (Co-Founding Director, Discovery Farms), **Shelly Mayer** (Executive Director, Professional Dairy Producers), **Brian Weigel** (Deputy Division Administrator, Division of External Services and WI DNR)

Moderator: **Amber Radatz** (Agriculture Water Quality Program Manager, UW-Madison Extension)

8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

Keynote – All Hands on Deck: What Every Sector Can Do to Grow Cover Crops (1 SW CEU)

Cates will describe recent strategy and planning discussions in Minnesota, which brought together actors across public and private sectors to come to consensus around the priority actions to improve soil health in Minnesota. She'll share how her scientific and educational efforts fit into this larger whole.

Speaker: **Dr. Anna Cates**, Associate Extension Professor/State Soil Health Specialist, University of Minnesota

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

BREAKOUT SESSION 3 (concurrent talks)

Breakout Room C

Advancing Conservation Through Farmer-Led Research (1SW CEU)

Discovery Farms on-farm research has impacted individual farmers who host the sites, but also the state of on-farm research in Wisconsin and statewide policy, such as the WI Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. Hear from a farmer on their experience with Discovery Farms and the impact they've seen, as well as from Discovery Farms staff on how the data they share is used throughout the state to inform water quality policy.

Speakers: **Joe Bragger** (Farmer, Bragger Family Dairy)

Lindsey Hartfiel (Discovery Farms)

Ellen Albright (Discovery Farms)

Moderator: **Sheri Schwert** (UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room F

Journey of Phosphorus (1SW CEU)

Phosphorus is essential in crop growth, yet its journey from field to waterway creates one of the most persistent challenges. In the phosphorus breakout session three experts will share research related to phosphorus to manage how P interacts in the environment.

Speakers: **Laura Paletta** (UW-Madison Extension)

Francisco Arriaga (UW-Madison)

Steve Hoffman (InDepth Agronomy)

Moderator: **Chris Clark** (UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room D

Is Your Relationship with Cover Crops Feeling Boring or Stagnant? (1CM CEU)

Is the relationship you have with cover crops not quite the thriving partnership you envisioned? Maybe it's time for a cover crop glow-up. Join us for a session that digs deeper into how advanced cover crop interactions—with manure, nitrogen and weed management, and soil health—can turn your lukewarm results into a flourishing success story. Attend this session and let's rekindle the spark and get the benefits you actually want from this relationship.

Speakers: **Andy Bensend** (Farmer, AB Farms)

Dan Andersen (Iowa State University)

Moderator: **Jerry Clark** (UW-Madison Extension)

Wednesday, December 17

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSION 4 (concurrent talks)

Breakout Room C

Advancing Conservation Through Farmer-Led Research: Part 2

(1 CM CEU)

Farmer-driven, on-farm research is extremely valuable to inform management decisions, promote practice adoption and support the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of Wisconsin farmers. Hear from three farmers about their experiences with on-farm research to advance cover cropping, improve manure management, and optimize nitrogen use—in pursuit of their conservation goals. Gain insights into what they are learning through these projects and how you can get started with on-farm research.

Speakers: **Nick Dallmann**

(Farmer, Dallmann East River Dairy)

Pat Socha (Farmer, Socha Farms)

Marty Weiss (Farmer, Mic-Mon-Dou Acres)

Moderator: **Abby Augarten**

(UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room F

Big Time Opportunities in Small Grains

(1 CM CEU)

Are we shorting small grains of their potential in Wisconsin? Bill Stangel will speak on his work with Charlie Hammer, farmer in Dodge County, to increase management to push yield in winter wheat through the Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network. Bill will also touch on his recent tour of winter wheat agronomics in the UK, bringing some lessons learned from across the pond. Graham Adsit will present on his experience growing and marketing non-wheat small grains like barley and figuring out the logistics to tap new markets.

Speakers: **Bill Stangel**

(Soil Solutions Consulting)

Graham Adsit (Farmer)

Moderator: **Will Fulwider**

(UW-Madison Extension)

Breakout Room D

Managing Cereal Rye for Weed Suppression and Soil Health in Wisconsin Grain Production

(0.5 IPM CEU | 0.5 CM CEU)

Increase awareness of land management practices that are utilized to improve soil health and water quality. These practices include nutrient management, cover crops, reduced or no-till, contour strips, etc and speakers will discuss how these various practices improve functionality of the soil and mitigate water quality concerns by reducing overapplication of nutrients and soil loss.

Speakers: **Chris Baxter**

(UW-Platteville)

Josh Kamps (UW-Madison Extension)

Moderator: **Dane Elmquist**

(UW-Madison Extension)

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Farmer Panel: Scaling Conservation Using Producer-Led Efforts (1 CM CEU)

Improving water and soil health outcomes across our landscapes requires both practical knowledge and social change. This panel will unpack successes and challenges in scaling up conservation practices through farmer-led soil and water quality networks in Wisconsin and neighboring states. The conversation will be informed by data and impact analysis from the Wisconsin Producer-Led Watershed Program, the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition, and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

Panelists: **Jeff Hadacheck** (Assistant Professor, Ag and Applied Economics, UW-Madison), **Mark Gutierrez** (Executive Director, Minnesota Soil Health Coalition), **Stefan Gailans** (Research Director, Practical Farmers of Iowa)

2025 WWASH Conference Planning Committee



WWASH
Wisconsin Water
and Soil Health
CONFERENCE

to offer a special thank you to UW-Madison Conferences and Events for assisting in registration, hotel, and conference space.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of those on the WWASH Conference Planning Committee that made this event possible through their time and thoughtful selection of the topics that are important to farmers, agronomists, and conservation professionals alike. We would also like



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