

**Section I**

**received**  
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**General Information**

1. Project Number: ENE95-6  
Grant Number: 632-8420  
Funding Period: September 1, 1995 - August 31, 1996
2. Project Title: Addressing the Needs of Extension Faculty and Staff Through a New York State Cover Crop Symposium

3. Project Coordinator:

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4. Type of Report: Annual or Final
5. Date of Report: 6/7/96
6. Reporting Period: From September 1, 1995 to June 7, 1996
7. Major Participants: Include name and affiliation - no changes
8. Cooperators: Include name and affiliation - no changes
9. Project Status: Please check one of the following. The Project is:

- New: received SARE Chapter 3 Professional Development Program Funding for the first time.
- Continuation: a previously approved project, following revision and competitive review.

## **SECTION II**

### **PROGRESS REPORT FORMAT**

#### **1. OBJECTIVE(S)**

To educate Cornell University faculty, extension staff, and other federal and state agency staff in New York on the use of cover crops as a sustainable farming practice by holding a one-day symposium highlighting current research across all agricultural commodities.

#### **2. ABSTRACT**

Researchers, extension staff and growers in New York State have shown a renewed interest in cover crops. Over the past several years, several SARE grants were funded in New York State looking at ways to increase their utilization across commodities. Although useful information has been collected and disseminated through the state, it has often been limited by commodity. Those working in vegetable crops, for example, are aware of work in that field. They are likely to lack information on cover crop utilization in other commodities, however, information that may be useful in their field. There has been no comprehensive effort bringing all of the New York State programs and several of the NE projects together to review the status of cover crop research in the state. On November 15, 1995, a one day cover crop symposium was conducted in Ithaca, NY. More than 60 Cornell Cooperative Extension faculty and staff with expertise in fruit, vegetables, field crops, and landscape horticulture were in attendance to hear and share the latest information on cover crops. Cover crops as they relate to soil structure, nutrient management, pest management, and production systems were discussed by New York State growers as well as experts from Cornell, Maine, and Quebec, Canada. With the training and resources received at the symposium, field agents are better able to access cover crop information, answer growers questions and concerns, and improve their expertise on the subject.

### **3. Specific Project Results**

#### **A. Accomplishments**

Despite a major snowstorm that prevented several speakers from attending the conference, the meeting was a success. Without some of the expected speakers, each moderator relied more on audience participation and sharing of their experiences. This resulted in much better exchange of ideas than was originally hoped for. Having the symposium cut across commodities was also effective. The format and content of the meeting is highly recommended for each state and was a very effective means to update extension staff on some of the latest work regarding cover crops.

Attendees at the symposium were made aware of a cover crop mailing list (vegsys-l@cornell.edu) designed to improve communication throughout the state on the subject. Subscribers have access to the latest cover crop information, as well as a venue for the exchange of ideas, questions, and solutions.

The symposium was to be videotaped, edited, and made available to all those in attendance as well as for those in the state who were not able to attend. Unfortunately, the snowstorm prevented the videotaping. We are still in the process of organizing a proceedings from the conference but its publication has taken longer than expected.

#### **B. Publicity for the Activities and Programs**

See appendices for copy of symposium announcement. Still to be produced is a proceedings from the conference.

### **4. Potential Contributions and Practical Applications of the Professional Development Program**

#### **A. Trainee Adoption and Direct Impact**

The symposium was very well received (see appendices) with 65% of those who filled out an evaluation stating that the information they received would be useful in their extension program. Attendees were made aware of current practices and research as well as where to turn for possible answers to questions from clientele.

## **B. Potential Benefits or Impacts**

The potential benefits to Cornell Cooperative Extension employees include;

- an enhanced understanding regarding how cover crops affect soil quality
- better able to assist clientele in recommending cover cropping strategies
- better knowledge of who to contact with questions and problems
- access to a mailing list designed to promote discussion of cover crops

## **C. Feedback from Farmers**

The only farmers in attendance were those that participated on the panels. Unfortunately, the weather prevented two panelists from attending. I was impressed with the willingness of the farmers to share their experiences, both successes and failures. It is often intimidating to stand in front of such a large group but the information they shared was extremely valuable. The growers ranged from a small organic fruit grower to a large processing vegetable grower. Some seemed surprised by a lack of extensive knowledge on the subject of cover crops by the audience and felt this symposium may well have a positive impact on the extension staff attending.

# NEW YORK STATE COVER CROP SYMPOSIUM

Sponsored by the Northeast Region SARE National  
Training and Education Program

for the  
1995 CCE Production Agriculture Inservice Education Week  
November 15, 1995

**Objective:** To inform attendees on the use of cover crops as a sustainable farming practice by holding a one-day symposium highlighting current research and practices across all agricultural commodities. Everyone attending is invited to share their experiences.

**Location:** Sheraton Inn/Conference Center, One Sheraton Drive, Ithaca, NY

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## PROGRAM

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### 8:30 Introduction to the Symposium;

*Stephen Reiners*, Assistant Professor, Department of Horticultural Sciences, Cornell University

### 8:45 Cover Crops and Soil Structure

*Stephen Reiners*, Moderator

*Fred B. Gaffney*, Conservation Agronomist, USDA, NRCS, Syracuse, NY

*John Myer*, Grower, Romulus, NY

*David W. Wolfe*, Associate Professor, Dept. of Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell University

### 9:45 Cover Crops and Nutrient Management

*Lee Stivers*, CCE Area Specialist, Lake Plains Vegetable Program, Albion, Moderator

*Richard Figiel*, Grower, Trumansburg, NY

*Roger Samson*, Executive Director, REAP Canada, St. Ann de Bellevue, Quebec

### 10:45 Break

### 11:00 Cover Crops and Pest Management

*Marvin Pritts*, Associate Professor, Dept. of Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell, Moderator

*Thomas Bjorkman*, Assistant Professor, Department of Horticultural Sciences, Cornell University

*Rosemary Loria*, Associate Professor, Department of Plant Pathology, Cornell University

*Francis Mangan*, Crop Extension Specialist, University of Massachusetts

*Dale Riggs*, CCE Area Specialist, Capital District Vegetable Program, Albany

*Neal Weicker*, Grower, Earthly Mirth Farm, Brooktondale, NY

### Noon Lunch

### 1:15 Cover Crops and Production Systems

*Ian Merwin*, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell University, Moderator

*Eric Gallandt*, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Sustainable Agriculture Program, University of Maine

*Bill Henry*, Grower, Eden, New York

*Larry Kuhns*, Professor of Horticulture, Penn State University

### 2:30 Adjourn

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CCE faculty and staff who have already registered for Production Agriculture Week do **not** need to register for the symposium. All others, please contact Steve Reiners (Dept. of Horticultural Sciences, NYSAES, Geneva, NY 14456/Phone 315-787-2311/FAX 315-787-2216) to register or for more information. Admission is free.

*Sheraton Inn/Conference Center is located off of Rte. 13 on N. Triphammer Road and Sheraton Drive. (607-257-2000)*

# NEW YORK STATE COVER CROP SYMPOSIUM

## EVALUATION

1. Do you feel there was a need for a Symposium of this type?

31 Yes                      8 No

Explain:

2. Was the program organized in an appropriate manner for the subject?

26 Yes                      13 No

Explain:

3. Was the Symposium of any educational value to you?

32 Yes                      7 No

Explain:

4. Will you be able to use any of the information presented here in your extension program?

24 Yes                      6 No                      7 Does not apply

Explain:

5. Please rate each of the Symposium sections as to its effectiveness:  
(1 being excellent and 5 being poor)

Cover Crops and Soil Structure	1.9
Cover Crops and Nutrient Management	2.2
Cover Crops and Pest Management	2.5
Cover Crops and Production Systems	2.3
Symposium overall	2.1

6. What information would you have liked to see covered in this symposium that you feel was omitted.

7. Would you like a copy of a proceedings from this meeting?

10 Yes                      24 No

Please add any additional comments on the back.