

Supporting Farms Through Improved Soil Health

Spiral Design Studio (www.spiraldesign.com)



June 11, 2020

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- [Farms & Food](#)

When it comes to climate change, farmers are on the frontline. With the global food supply depending on their success, many farmers are trying new and innovative approaches to raising crops and livestock in an environmentally sustainable way.

ASA is happy to support those efforts and, thanks to a Northeast SARE Partnership Grant awarded to ASA in 2019, ASA is working with three local farms to explore ways to increase the resilience of their soil.

Combating Climate Change from the Ground Up

The grant provides funds to engage Dr. Allen Williams to work directly with Tiashoke Farm, Otter Creek Farm, and Hickory Hill Farm to test new methods to improve soil quality and health, reduce erosion and nutrient loss, increase water-holding capacity and elevate the level of organic matter in the soil.

Dr. Williams is a widely recognized expert on soil health and regenerative agriculture. Raised on a family farm in South Carolina, he is a founding member of Understanding Ag LLC. Dr. Williams and his colleagues specialize in a whole farm planning approach that creates additional revenue opportunities.

Working with these three local farms, Dr. Williams will explore the benefits of interseeding cover crops in silage corn early in the season. After the corn is harvested, a portion of the cover crops will be used to graze animals. Soil tests will be taken over the three-year life of the grant to measure the results of combining cover crops and grazing on land used for corn production.

These steps should reduce costs, as well as boost yields and crop resilience in the face of excessively dry or wet weather. The broader community should also benefit since these farming methods mitigate the effects of excessive rain events and help improve water quality.

Dr. Williams will lead a Field Day Discussion for the farming community (*look for more information on ASA's*

website later this summer) at the end of each growing season to share lessons learned, including the benefits or challenges farmers identify.

It is also ASA's hope that this collaboration will encourage other farmers to try interseeding cover crops in silage corn as well as adaptive grazing as methods of improving soil health.



Sustainable Agriculture
Research & Education

This grant is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program under sub-award number ONE19-330."
