

SUCCESS in NORTH DAKOTA

Maximizing Profit Opportunities in Pulse Crops

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"The piece that has been the most beneficial to me this year was the advice of seeding the less competitive crops at a heavier rate than the other more competitive crop. This year I did a chickpea/flax intercrop and thus seeded the chickpea heavier than the flax to hopefully see a good combination. Yield was lower than expected due to disease problems with unusually wet weather conditions. In the future learning more about disease management and combine settings would really help."

Situation: Pulse crops offer several benefits to agriculture in North Dakota. In North Dakota, where agriculture plays a crucial role in the economy, integrating pulse crops into farming systems can offer numerous advantages, including resilience to climate variability, improved soil health, and access to expanding markets for plant-based proteins. In response to this need, the North Dakota State University organized a series of podcasts, two workshops, one field day, two cafe' talks and one extension publication to educate growers that were interested in this area.

A producer located in the far northwest corner of North Dakota who has been farming with his wife and her family for 5 years has been wanting to try intercropping for a number of years. He was planning to do intercropping this past year, so he attended two of the events that were part of this project – Introduction to Intercropping and a Café Talk. One of the areas of intercropping he has always had questions about was what seeding rates to use for different intercrop mixes. During the workshops there was a presentation from NDSU extension specialists on their research and as well as producer panels where they all talked about their experiences and discussed seeding rates. He was able to attend a Cafe talk that was held in his area where growers who intercrop shared their cropping practices.

Outcomes: The events held and materials developed helped farmers increase their understanding of market, production, and financial risk management as it related to intercropping and alternative marketing practices for pulse crops. During the project timeframe 1,376 growers were reached, with 134 face to face interactions and 1,243 individuals reached online through hybrid workshops, podcast downloads, and video views. Increased interest was observed of some participants in adopting intercropping following the events. The pulse industry in North Dakota is struggling due to poor management of root and foliar disease, intercropping will play an important role in the future of this industry.

Impacts: Through the workshops, producers learnt the agronomics of intercropping practices, land use efficiency and economics of intercropping vs conventional monoculture. Producers also had the opportunity to evaluate whether intercropping is a practice that is suitable for their operations. Some producers will be developing a plan for implementing intercropping on their farm. Overall, growers that attended the workshops, have become more aware of alternative cropping practices.

I am thankful for these opportunities to learn from both extension professionals and also producers who have experience growing these crops to provide practical application of this idea of intercropping."

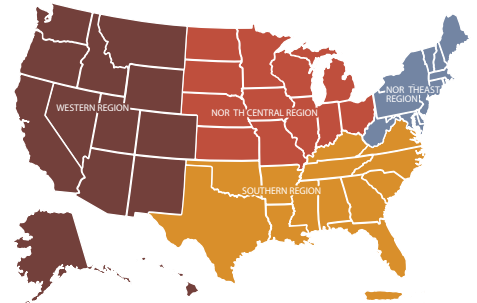
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