

SMALL GRAINS IN THE CORN BELT

Project Components

THE BASICS

GOAL: Establish the right conditions to make small grains work for farmers in the Corn Belt which will positively impact water quality, soil health and greenhouse gas emissions, recognizing that that market demand is necessary to incentivize diversifying the current corn-soy rotation.

PROJECT LEADS: SFL & PFI

PRIMARY FUNDERS: USDA NRCS CIG Grant, Walton Family Foundation, NCR-SARE, McKnight Foundation

TIMELINE: Through 2021

SUPPLY CHAIN (SC) PARTNERS: ADM, Albert Lea Seed House, Blue Apron, Cargill, Danone, General Mills, Grain Millers, Mars, McDonald's, Oatly, PepsiCo, Seven Sundays, Smithfield, Target, Unilever, Welter Seed & Honey Co.

SUPPLY CHAIN PARTNER PROJECTS

FEEDING TRIALS & FEASIBILITY

OBJECTIVE: Conduct feeding trials and/or feasibility studies to better understand the business case and barriers for scaling small grains as a component of feed rations.

SC PARTNERS: Cargill, Danone, Mars, Target McDonald's, Smithfield

COVER CROP SEED AS A SECONDARY MARKET

OBJECTIVE: Provide cover crop cost share and agronomic support to drive cover crop adoption and seed demand, collaborate on multi-crop rotations for soil health.

SC PARTNERS: Unilever, PepsiCo, ADM, Cargill

SMALL GRAIN VARIETY TRIALS

OBJECTIVE: Increase data on small grain performance for both farmers and industry.

SC PARTNERS: Albert Lea Seed House, General Mills, Grain Millers, Welter Seed & Honey Co.

FOOD MARKET PILOTS

OBJECTIVE: Design pilot to source Midwest food grade oats grown with a nitrogen-fixing legume cover crop in rotation with corn and soybeans.

SC PARTNERS: Oatly, Seven Sundays

SYSTEM LEVEL RESEARCH

TRACEABILITY

OBJECTIVE: Link downstream processing locations to upstream animal production locations and associated corn, soy and distillers grains feed sheds using UMN NorthStar's FOODS³ Model.

SC PARTNERS: Interested companies TBC

PRICING MECHANISMS

OBJECTIVE: Support guided action-research efforts to address issues of incentives, contracting and price volatility to identify new commercially relevant models of cost and risk share.

SC PARTNERS: Interested companies TBC

INCREASE SMALL GRAIN RESEARCH

OBJECTIVE: Increase university research and peer-reviewed publications of agronomic, environmental and economic performance of extended cropping systems and its components including legume cover crop breeding, small grain variety selection and effect on water quality and soil health.

PARTNERS: Midwest Extended Rotation Council

FARM LEVEL WORK

IMPACT MONITORING

OBJECTIVE: Document field and landscape level changes in extended rotations and associated environmental benefits, changes in GHG emissions, water quality, soil health and energy use to quantify the impact value of companies' investments in the project using the Cool Farm Tool, the FieldPrint Calculator and the Resource Stewardship Enhancement Tool. Link crop level changes to their impact within the protein sector.

SC PARTNERS: All

INCREASE FARMER CONFIDENCE

OBJECTIVE: Continue to build confidence among corn-soybean farmers to revive small grains and legume cover crop production on their farms, through cost share, agronomic, and marketing support.

SC PARTNERS: All



QUESTIONS? CONTACT [ELIZABETH REAVES](#) (SFL), [SARAH CARLSON](#) (PFI) OR VISIT THE PROGRAM [WEBSITE](#)