

Sacramento Valley Cover Crop Tour:
Using Cover Crops Effectively

Thursday, March 3, 2022, 8:00 AM-7:30 PM
Colusa, California
50-60 max participants

Hosted by:

Western Cover Crop Council-Southwest Region and
University of California Cooperative Extension
Funding provided by Western SARE

Join us for a tour of several cover crop sites in the Sacramento Valley including orchards and annual crop fields. Cover crop species, cultivars and mixes including legumes, grasses and brassicas will be showcased.

You'll hear from farmers, extension specialists, and researchers on topics such as cover crop selection, equipment to manage cover crops, considerations for cover crop management, and building soil health.

Van transportation is included. There will be light to moderate walking on mostly flat ground at each site, so please wear appropriate footwear and dress in layers for inclement weather.

7:45 **Meet at Colusa County UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE); coffee and pastries provided**
100 Sunrise Boulevard, Suite E, Colusa

8:15 Load vans and depart

8:25 Arrive at Stop #1, 3458 River Road, Colusa

River Road Site: At this site there are three fields to look at: a cover cropped pecan orchard, annual row crop demonstration plots, and replicated research plots. This site includes large and small scale cover crop demonstration plots with single species and mixes, many mustard cover crops as well as replicated research plots evaluating mitigation of soil compaction with winter cover crops.

8:30 **Welcome and overview of tour topics that will be covered throughout the day**

Introduction to research site with an overview of research and general discussion about the benefits of cover crops and the challenges to consider.

Sarah Light, Agronomy Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Sutter-Yuba and Colusa Counties and Chair, SWCCC (20 min)

8:50 Walk to other location (10 min)

9:00 **Diverse cropping systems and integrating cover crops, nitrogen fixation/legumes, water management and cover crops.**

Hossein Zakeri, Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems, CSU Chico (25 min)

9:25 View fields/ Q&A (10 min)

9:35 Return to vehicles (10)

9:45 Depart

9:55 Arrive at Stop #2, 7681 Sycamore Slough Road, Colusa

Davis Ranches: At this site, 31 demonstration plots have been planted out in legumes and grasses including both single and mixed species. In addition, part of the field is in the third year of a collaborative research project between UCCE and the Colusa Resource Conservation District measuring changes in soil moisture dynamics with and without winter cover crops.

10:05 **Introduction to Davis Ranch site and NRCS and RCD Incentive Programs for funding cover crops**

Liz Harper, Executive Director, Colusa Resource Conservation District (15 min)

10:20 **Benefits of cover crops in CA agriculture, cover crop species selection for CA climates, establishment methods, termination methods**

Margaret Smither-Kopperl, Manager, Lockeford Plant Materials Center (20 min)

10:40 **Entering into/transitioning to cover cropping in the most arid state in the nation.**

Highlights to include: Timing, species that work, no-till cover cropping, rotations, hemp, corn, alfalfa.

Joe Frey, Owner, Western States Hemp, Fallon, Nevada (15 min)

10:55 View fields/ Q&A (10 min)

11:05 Depart

11:25 Arrive Stop #3, 2868 S. Meridian Road, Meridian

Park Farming Organics was founded in 1980 with processing tomatoes as the main crop. The farm now produces a diversity of crops, and the farming practices include thoughtful crop rotation, extensive use of cover crops, reduced tillage methods, and light fertility inputs, with focus on building healthy soils.

11:30 **Introduction to the farm: Cover cropping systems in use with review of trial and error.**

Kaon Grazing: Grazing livestock in annual organic row crop systems – species, timing, methods, nutritional value to livestock, challenges.

Brian Park, Owner, Park Farming Organics (20 min)

11:50 **Impacts of grazing cover crops on soil health**

Sequoia Williams, PhD Student, Agroecology, UC Davis (15 min)

12:05 **Cover crops for erosion control, reducing nonpoint source pollution and soil conservation**

Chuck Schembre, Environmental Scientist, Nevada Bureau of Water Quality Planning (15 min)

12:20 View fields/Q&A (10 min)

12:30 Lunch

1:15 **Tour of equipment and demonstration**

Brian Park, Owner, Park Farming Organics (30)

1:45 Depart

2:15 Arrive Stop #4, Intersection of Bailey Road and Grimes-Arbuckle Road, Arbuckle (~ ½ mile North of 1202 Grimes-Arbuckle Road)

Cover Crop Site in Almond Orchard, Family-owned farm dating back to 1860 consists of 350 acres of almond, 200 acres of row crops and approximately 50 acres of riparian habitat on the Colusa Basin Drain. Cover crops have been integrated into the almonds for 4 years. The site is also includes research conducted by Amalie Gaudin's Soils Science Lab and Neal Williams Apiary Lab at UC Davis.

2:20 **Introduction to the farm: Cover cropping systems used and management**

What have been success and failures. What to consider and plan for in the future.

Ben King, Owner, Pacific Gold Agriculture (15)

2:35 **Cropping selection and approach and other projects around CA, Insectary, pollination and bee habitat**

Billy Synk, Pollinator Habitat Specialist, Pollinator Partnership

Rory Crowley, Director, Habitat Programs, Project Apis m. (25 min)

3:00 **Broad benefits and tradeoffs of cover crops in orchards and best management practices**

Amelie Gaudin, Associate Professor, Agroecology, UC Davis (25 min)

3:25 View fields/ Q&A (10 min.)

3:35 Depart

4:10 Arrive Stop #5, 3249 Butte Slough Road, Colusa

Slough House Social, Discussion and Q&A with presenters while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and beverages

5:30 Dinner

6:45 Adjourn and depart

7:30 Arrive at Colusa UCCE