

2020 FAP Program Grantee Spotlight: Royer Family Farm



A photo taken by Water Quality inspector David Wardrop during a field check for the FAP program shows interseeded cover crop growing between the rows of corn on Royer Family Farm. Every year in July, Lori Royer broadcasts a diverse cover crop mix, including radishes, grasses, winter rye, and clover, between her corn rows and integrates this cover crop into her no-till system.

By the Numbers

~103 acres in cover crop

\$2700 awarded

~67lbs P reduced from
conservation practice
implementation

“You should have seen my **cover-cropped** fields, they looked **beautiful** ... they could take a picture for a magazine!”

– Lori Royer, owner and operator of Royer Family Farm

Recipient

Royer Family Farm is a 130-acre dairy farm in Irasburg VT, owned and operated by Lori Royer. Lori milks around 175 animals and keeps around 300 total head of cattle. She raises the feed for her herd entirely on her farm, primarily through growing corn.

Grant Award

\$2700.00 for cover-cropping ~103 acres in FY 2020.

Funding Source

Farm Agronomic Practice (FAP) program

Grant details

With the help of UVM extension staff member Jeff Sanders, Lori Royer applied to the FAP program in FY 2020 for a practice payment for 90 acres of interseeded cover crops, which were approved at a standard payment rate of \$30/acre for a grant total of \$2700. Ultimately, Lori planted acreage in excess of her original estimates and received grant payment in full.

Impact

Royer Family Farm has signed up for the FAP program for many years and has planted their crops completely no-till since 2016. With the assistance of Jeff Sanders, an Agronomy Specialist from University of Vermont Extension, the farm also consistently interseeds a variety of cover crop on their corn acres, which was funded through the FAP program in 2020.

When asked about the success her farm has had with cover crops, Lori Royer, the principal owner and operator of the farm, gushes. She has seen much less erosion and richer soil on the farm since starting the combination of cover cropping and no-till that the farm currently practices. “My soils are better, my crop yield is better. It’s proven itself,” she shared.

Royer Family Farm uses a diverse cover crop mix, including radishes, grasses, winter rye, and clover, according to Lori Royer. These plants have done well in the no-till system and have had additional conservation benefits beyond water quality improvements.

“I dug up a radish that was at least 10 inches last year. And the deer love it,” Lori Royer said in an interview. She also pointed out that the cover crops, which she broadcasts between her rows of corn right after the urea seeding in July, help with weed control on her corn land. She has also seen a significant improvement on her heavy wet soils: she no longer gets stuck in the wet spots while chopping.

Lori Royer says she tells other farms to do away with their plows and harrows – “there’s no need for them!” and is a staunch advocate of cover-cropping as part of a no-till system. She appreciates the Farm Agronomic Practice (FAP) program because “it helps pay for the seed, at least.” This payment makes it more possible for her to continue using this practice, which has had such benefits for her farm and soil.

**“If you hold your soils
where they belong,
they’re not leaching into
your water system and
the nutrients stay
where you need them.”**

– Lori Royer, owner and operator
of Royer Family Farm



With technical assistance from Jeff Sanders of UVM Extension Saint Albans, Lori Royer interseeds cover crops between her rows of standing corn in the middle of the season. Cover crops protect the soil from erosion and nutrient losses.