Ron Schoepp believes in using livestock grazing, no-till and cover crops to achieve good soil management and economic stability.

“We switched to rotational grazing in 1999, and began using mob grazing in 2008 to gain higher stocking rates,” he said of the approach some have called “Schoepp Style.”

The Demonstration Details

Schoepp Farms will rotationally graze cover crops and corn stalks following the harvest of corn and winter wheat crops. Parts of the fields will be excluded from the grazed area, with both areas sampled for soil health parameters to quantify the difference caused by grazing.

Ron has used rye as a cover crops after corn and soybeans for years. To extend the grazing season, livestock graze the corn stalks after grain harvest. He wants to demonstrate how corn stalks and cover crops can add more feed while enhancing the health of his livestock and soil. The integration of livestock grazing onto crop fields is a principle of soil health.

Ron plans to interseed a cover crop mix between corn rows. This should result in producing more biomass for grazing after the corn is harvested.

He is also adding barley to his cover crop mix after growing winter wheat. Barley should add feed volume and value for his cattle. He’ll also determine if barley builds resilience for a longer feeding schedule during the cooler fall temperatures.

The Bottom Line

While Ron has long believed in what he is doing, he looks forward to having data that shows the positive effects of grazing cattle on cover crops. He also hopes the demonstration and data will convince other farmers to do the same.
HISTORY:
The Schoepps have farmed near Lake Wisconsin since 1949. Ron joined the farm management in 1984.

FAMILY:
Ron farms with his parents, Dave and Nancy, with assistance from his son, Noah.

CROPS:
They grow corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa on about 500 acres.

CATTLE:
They rotational graze about 200 heifers, 50 dry cows and 20 grass-fed beef cattle on 120 acres in Columbia and Sauk Counties.

MANAGEMENT:
Ron believes in using livestock grazing, no-till and cover crops to achieve good soil management and economic stability.

FOR MORE PROJECT INFORMATION VISIT:
Sand County Foundation
www.sandcountyfoundation.org/RotationalGrazing