



SEASON'S GREETINGS 2025

To our family and friends from us at Matt Farms!

We were blessed with good and timely rains this past growing season resulting in a bountiful soybean harvest on the farm. The market for soybeans, however, has been challenging. Tariffs, the trade war with China and soybean production in South America have muted prices. We knew that the commodities market is subject to the economic law of supply and demand and that the weather affects supply. We're learning that demand, while not affected by the weather, can be just as unpredictable as the weather. It is amazing to us how much of the business of farming is out of the farmer's control!



We tried a new conservation practice on the farm this year. We had cover crop seeds spread by airplane over the growing soybean crop. The seed drop was done around Labor Day and consisted of a mix of mostly oats and some rapeseed. Cover crops are plants that are planted in the fall to "cover" the soil until the next year's crop. While they generally are not harvested, they have many benefits nonetheless.

Cover crops help prevent soil erosion caused by water and wind, help aerate the soil and suppress fall weed growth. Their roots capture nitrates preventing them from getting into the water table and waterways. They also capture nutrients to fertilize the next year's commodity crop as they decompose. In addition, cover crops capture carbon from the air and add organic matter to the soil. Cover crops are part of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS) to reduce nutrients entering into the Mississippi River.

The financial benefits of cover crops are hard to quantifiably measure, but the costs to plant and manage them are not. There are programs to help offset their costs, and planting cover crops on corn and soybean acres in Iowa has grown dramatically since the adoption of the NRS increasing from 10,000 acres in 2013 to 3.87 million acres in 2024 (that's 17% of Iowa's corn and soybean acres in 2024).

We are striving to educate ourselves and we're trying new things in an effort to be good stewards of the land and a good member of the community. We invite you to visit our mattfarms.com website for links to additional (and more "official") information about cover crops in Iowa. Thanks again to our big sister Annie for her help in creating and maintaining our ever expanding website and with our holiday letters.

Best wishes to everyone for a very Merry Christmas and all the best throughout the New Year!

Bill and Dick

P.S. Photos of the cover crops growing on the farm this fall taken by Templeton Family Farms.

