

# Black Hawk Creek Watershed of Iowa

## FARM #15

Jack Boyer has been farming for over 40 years. He's been farming on his father-in-law's century farm, which was established in Reinbeck, Iowa, in 1912, for over 15 years.

On his farm, Jack raises corn, soybean, cereal corn and seed corn. He strip-tills his seed corn and practices no-till on the rest of his acreage. "That has worked out great," he said. "Fewer trips across the field, and I've done some trials with strip-till and no-till, and I've seen no degradation in the yields."

Jack has been utilizing cover crops on his farm since around 2010, when he heard Ray Archuleta speak at a soil health conference. "He was talking about using cover crops, improving soil health, and slowing down the rate of degradation of organic matter," Jack said. "It really caught my attention, because in a soybean/seed corn rotation, you return very little back to the soil."

Jack first experimented with cover crops on 50 acres. In his first year, he saw some benefits, including water infiltration improvements. These improvements encouraged him to continue to increase his acreage until he had cover crops on all his acres four years later.

Jack plants all his soybeans green now and doesn't terminate the cover crop until after planting. He's found that his planting machinery flows through the field much easier with a green cover crop instead of a dead, crispy one. He also sees the benefit of extra weed control, as allowing the cover crop to grow longer created more plant mass to choke out weeds.

Jack is active with the Tama Soil and Water Conservation District and participates in a lot of on-farm research. For the past few years, he's been conducting trials to attempt to reduce his nutrient inputs. His current trials have focused primarily on nitrogen inputs, but he hopes to further expand that to other inputs as well.



"The first thing that I suggest when someone is considering cover crops is to ask yourself what your objectives are," Jack said. "For my operation, it started out to be building organic matter with secondary objectives of erosion reduction and nutrient capture."

"People, you have to want it to work, you have to try, and you have to be willing to make some adjustments, perhaps, but it can work in every area," he said.

View Jack's interview:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM9\\_p7RtqYE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM9_p7RtqYE)

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