

## **Building Fertility through Cover Crops**

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

Ontario County CCE

480 N. Main St, Canandaigua, NY

8:45 Registration

9am Welcome, announcements – *Robert Hadad, Cornell Vegetable Program*

### **9:05 – 9:40 Introduction to Fertility Management Using Cover Crops**

*Prof. Laurie Drinkwater, Dept. Hort CU*

This talk will focus on the background science and biological concepts underlying successful fertility management using cover crops. Broader impacts of cover cropping and any available basic economic information will be included.

### **9:40 – 10:45 Using the Cornell Cover Crop Decision Making Tool**

*Prof. Thomas Bjorkman, Dept. Hort CU*

The Cover Crop Decision Making Tool is an asset for farms looking to incorporate cover crops into their rotations. By asking simple questions like ‘what is your planting time’ the tool helps growers develop a plan that works for their farm. This session is a hands-on training on the tool.

10:45 – 11:00 Break

### **11:00 – 11:45 Using Legumes and Legume Mixes to Build Fertility – *Laurie Drinkwater***

Laurie will build on her morning talk and get into specifics on how to select, establish, and maintain legume cover crops to increase nitrogen fertility.

11:45 – 12:30 Lunch

### **12:30 – 12:45 Grower Experience – *Brian Caldwell***

Brian has used cover crops extensively first as a small scale organic vegetable grower, then as field manager of the Cornell Organic Cropping Systems Project. He will share practical information on the best planting date windows for various species. He will also discuss realistic expectations from cover crops and suggest equipment options.

### **12:45 – 1:00 Grower Experience – *Rick Pedersen, Pedersen Farms***

Rick is the owner of Pedersen Farms in Seneca Castle and has 600 certified organic acres that he uses for vegetable and grain production. He is a cover cropping veteran, and will focus on what worked well in his vegetable system.

**1:00 – 1:20 Q&A with Grower Panel**

**1:20 – 1:40 Non-legume Summer Cover Options for Nutrient Retention**

*Thomas Bjorkman*

Scavenging unused nutrients is an important component to on-farm fertility building. Thomas will discuss the attributes and limitations of both short season, summer sown and longer term, fall/spring sown non-legume cover crops.

**1:40 – 2:00 Small Group Session**

The aim of the session is to allow growers to work together to synthesize the presented information into adoption plans for their farms. Speakers will be on hand to help guide discussion and answer questions.