Fields of Green

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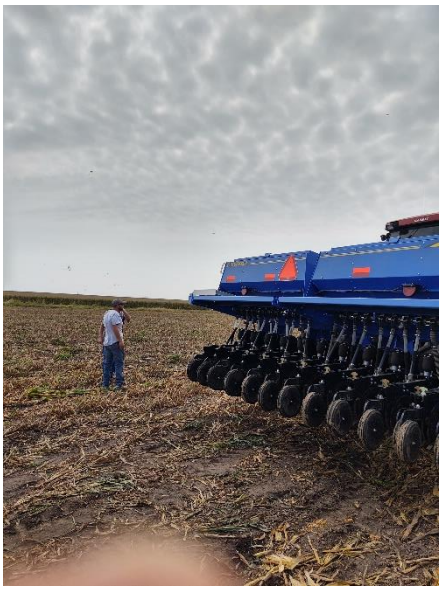
(Cover Crops Growing on a Seed Corn Field)



(Drilling Cover Crops in Milo Stubble)

Soil for Generations

On the Walters Farm we have been working to increase our soil health across all of the acres that we farm. One way that we have been trying to do this is by planting more cover crops to conserve moisture, decrease erosion, suppress weeds, and provide additional feed resources for our cattle. One program that we have utilized for the past two years is drilling oats on the end rows of our seed corn fields and harvesting the oats for hay before machines get into the field for seed operations. This has worked out well for us by giving us an additional feed resource for the cattle. This year we followed the oats up with a multi-species mix on those corners and end rows (pictured above) that consisted of millets, rye, radishes and others that helped keep weeds down on the borders late into the summer. We let this crop stay in the field for winter cover for wildlife and for cattle to graze on select fields.

Additionally, we spread cover crops on all of our seed corn acres to keep a living root in the soil at all times during the growing season. We plant this cover while we are destroying the male

rows of the seed corn in early August. This gives the crop of turnips, radishes, and rye ample time to establish before winter. This year we also tried some wheat on those acres to provide greater ground cover going into next spring. This wheat and rye that overwinter will be terminated around the time we plant our spring crops next year. By doing so we have a living root in the soil all year round and in turn increase the biological activity of the soil. The turnips and radishes make excellent cattle feed in the fall for our herd to graze.
We are also working with Pheasants Forever this year and have drilled a mix of cover on our milo stubble to give the birds a place of refuge next spring. In this program they help us with some seed costs as long as we don't harvest or destroy the cover crop prior to our next cash crop.
Along with the covers we have converted the majority of our acres to a no-till farming system where we can. By making less trips across the soil with tillage we are not only saving time and labor to do so but we are allowing the soil biome to remain intact and healthy. This allows soil microbes to flourish and increases the organic matter of soils. Hopefully by implementing no-till we can create healthier soils in the future so that our kids have better soils to farm than we have.

Business Offerings Expanded

Farming is and always will be our top priority here at Walters Ag. However we have had the opportunity this year to partner with several companies to offer their products locally to growers. With low commodity prices we have looked for ways to diversify our revenue and protect ourselves from being 100% reliant on commodities.

We have always said that we will not sell a product just to make a sale. We only will recommend products that we have used and tested on our own farm to prove them out and show that they are worth the investment.

With that, we have partnered with Compass Minerals to offer their line of plant nutrition and foliar fertilizer products. We have worked with them doing trials for the past two years and those products have given us a positive ROI.

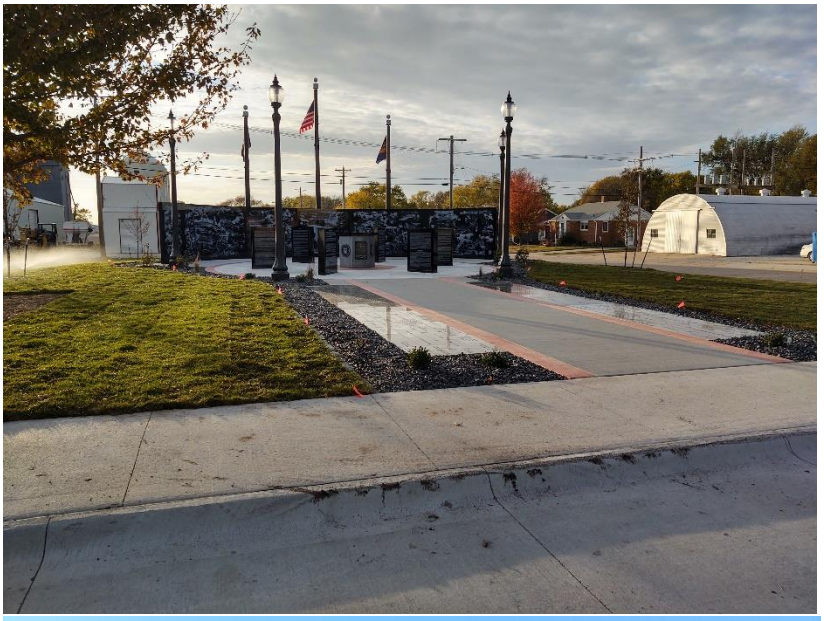
By investing heavily in cover crops we wanted to have a partner who we could readily access seed from at a great price. This is why we partnered with Polansky Seed out of Belleville, KS to offer their line of cover crop seeds to local producers. They have a solid reputation in the business being around since 1941 offering seed.

Lastly, we partnered with a national company called Pivot Bio try to reduce our dependance on synthetic nitrogen fertilizer. Pivot Bio is a California venture capital funded company that produces a biological microbe that delivers nitrogen to corn plants. This natural microbe applied with the planter attaches itself to the corn roots, feeds off of the root sugars, takes in atmospheric nitrogen, and converts it to ammonia (the form of nitrogen that corn can utilize) that is directly taken up by the corn plant roots. We have tested the product this year and it performed well for us. We think it is a product of the future that can aide farmers in utilizing less commercial fertilizer. Nitrogen leaching and runoff that can be a problem with other nitrogen fertilizers doesn't occur with Pivot Bio because it isn't mobile in the soil.

New Addition to the Crew

On September 3rd Wade and Abby welcomed their first child Cora Leigh Walters. She weighed 9 lbs. 2 oz and is growing and becoming more active every day.

50 Flags Veterans Memorial



One project that Mike, Wade, and Spencer have been active in planning and constructing in the Shickley community is the 50 Flags Veterans Memorial honoring all veterans. All three were active in planning, designing, and fundraising for the nearly $500,000 project for the past 4 years. Wade and Spencer were instrumental in the fundraising and coordinated the event that raised over $70,000 in one day in June 2019. The project was finally constructed in the Fall of 2020 and is a sight to see in the small community of Shickley. If you are ever in Shickley be sure to stop by and visit the area and reflect on the sacrifice our veterans have made for our nation. Many of you will also recognize family members who have their names or portraits engraved in the stone. The memorial has a back wall with military scenes interwoven with portraits of local veterans. There are also name slabs surrounding a center pedestal that includes the names of all veterans in the Shickley area from the Civil War to the War on Terror as well as numerous others from around the country. Finishing off the memorial will be a statue in the center that is to be installed in the coming months. For a more in depth look of the memorial and all of the faces and names on it go to https://www.facebook.com/50flagsveteransmemorial for more close up photos.