

# INVESTING IN SOIL HEALTH

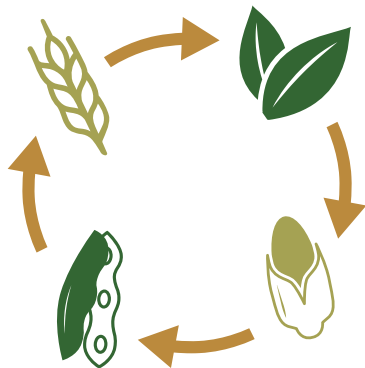
R.D. Offutt Farms is committed to implementing farming practices that support soil health. Healthy soil means healthy plants and healthy plants mean a strong food supply and a healthy planet. We implement best management practices that make our farms more efficient, environmentally friendly and produce better yields.

## LONG CROP ROTATIONS

One of those best practices is to rotate the type of crops grown from one year to another. Crop rotation adds nutrients to the soil and interrupts pest and disease cycles associated with each crop. We work with our neighbors and other local farmers to trade land, which makes it possible to rotate crops and keep more of the soil in Minnesota healthy and sustainable.

At our Wadena farm, when we increased the rotation schedule, productivity improved. In turn, we reduced the acres we needed to farm in order to grow the same amount of potatoes and meet our contractual obligations.

Specifically, we went from farming potatoes 3,200 acres every 2 to 3 years → 2,200 acres every 4 to 5 years = the same production.



Due to long-standing arrangements, our average crop rotation is **four years.**

# ORGANIC FERTILIZER PRODUCES STRONG YIELDS

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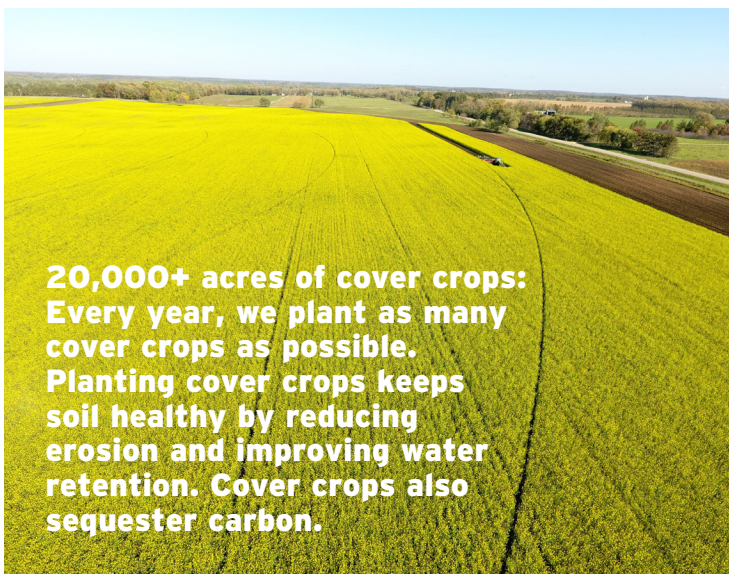
For more than 30 years, turkey litter has been used as an organic fertilizer at our farm in Little Falls, Minn. Sourced locally, using this natural fertilizer adds organic matter to the soil and improves water retention. Data shows fields treated with turkey litter are highly productive and reduces the need for commercial crop protectants.

**During the past six growing seasons, we've tripled our use of organic fertilizer, and we are working with NDSU to study turkey litter as a potential replacement for traditional fertilizers.**

## COVER CROPS REDUCE SOIL EROSION AND RUNOFF

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Cover crops are planted for the soil, instead of your plate. They are not cash crops but serve a critical purpose - taking care of the soil so it can take care of other crops. **R.D. Offutt Farms** has planted cover crops for more than 20 years. Typically, cover crops are planted in the fall and incorporated into the soil in the spring. We use a variety of cover crops, including rye, oats, mustard and tillage radish.



We are investing in new and innovative equipment. We are working with manufacturers to develop high-speed irrigators, which may be a more efficient way to apply crop protectants and allow farmers a longer window of time to apply when conditions are right. **The advantage of using the irrigator is that it drives the protectant deeper into the plant canopy for better protection, which also could result in lower product use.** The high-speed irrigator also negates aerial application, reducing noise for neighbors.

## RESPONSIBLE USE OF CROP PROTECTANTS

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R.D. Offutt Farms manages inputs to protect soil and water to achieve positive crop outcomes. Across the Midwest, there is significant variation in soil structure, weather and other factors impacting input decisions. Given all these differences, we believe that the most sustainable way to farm is one field at a time - giving the individual crop what it needs.

Using modern soil sampling methodologies and many years of farming experience, we apply just the right amount of inputs on crops, and no more. Our long rotation schedule also leads to healthier fields, requiring less inputs. We follow strict regulatory guidelines by Minnesota Department of Agriculture and label requirements established by the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as implement best management practices recommended by the University of Minnesota.