Minnesota Cover Crop Report: 2017

During the 2017-year, MN Soybean and the University of Minnesota represented more than 60% of the respondents, with the Soil Water Conservation groups accounting for 20.7% (Figure 1).

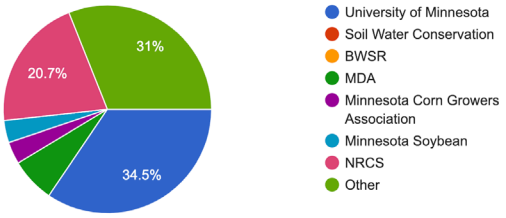

Figure 1. Survey responses for institutions across Minnesota. There were 29 respondents

Across the organizations listed above, 106 cover crop events were hosted in 2017, reaching more than 5000 people. In addition to training more than 5000 people, 80% of the respondents produced a suite of cover crop products. For example, there were several cover crop presentations lead by graduate students and hosted at the Tri-Society (e.g., ASA, CSSA, and SSSA) meetings, publications including *Soil Health for Immigrant Farmers Educational Manual*, *Managing Risk when using Herbicides and Cover Crops in Corn and Soybean*, several cover crop newsletters, *Winter Camelina Relay Cropping Growers Guide*, *Drowned-out or hailed-out crops and prevented planting - what to do now?*, and several peer-reviewed manuscripts covering topics such as: pennycress seed germination, winter camelina end-user products, oilseed genetics, and oilseed production and management.

Of the 28 respondents, zero reported data for social media accounts, including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Even though modern forms of social media were not represented, 80% of respondents stated they made conventional media appearances (e.g., radio, TV, and newspaper), with 67% stating that they maintain recurring newspaper and magazine columns, and radio spots (e.g., MN Public Radios, KATE Radio, Albert Lea Tribune, Morris Sun and Tribune, No-Till Farmer, Successful Farming, and Furrow).

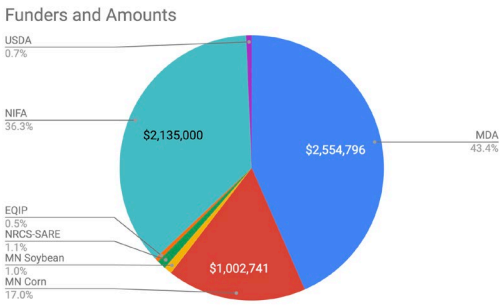

Figure 2. Cover crop funding for 2017.

Cover crop funding continued to be consistent in Minnesota with a mix of federal and state derived support. Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Board along with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture provide more than 3.5 million in cover crop support (Figure 2), whereas USDA-NIFA provided more than 2 million to support cover crop research with 1.5 million supporting organic agriculture (Figure 2). A word cloud comprised from the titles of the funded projects highlights soil health, nutrients leaching, management and breeding as some of the most frequent themes. Moving forward in MN, water quality protection, continues to a main concern and cover crops are being leveraged to meet this challenge. A predominant bottleneck expressed by farmers is the ability of cover crops to improve the their economic outlook in the near-term.

Figure 3. Word cloud from the fund project titles.