

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

RACHEL FROST

Rachel Frost is the Coordinator for the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council, which is comprised of the 15 conservation districts that border the Missouri River in Montana. Rachel grew up on a ranch and holds degrees in animal science and rangeland ecology. She has spent much of her professional career working in the university system exploring ways to manage invasive plants on range lands and riparian areas. The Council recently formed the Montana Salt Cedar Team and Rachel works with the conservation districts to organize treatments, conduct educational events, and seek funding for Salt Cedar control.

MARK HENNING

Mark Henning is the Area Agronomist for NRCS in Miles City, MT. He works with producers in eastern Montana to improve their soil health by using tools such as cover crop mixes, crop diversity, no-till and grazing. He views improving soil health as the foundation for helping farmers and ranchers improve their operations and overcome challenges, which means core problems have to be addressed versus only treating symptoms. Mark will connect the principles of soil health to the importance of crop diversity and weeds. He will cover issues with herbicide resistant weeds, herbicide carryover and its' significance for increasing crop diversity and intensity. He will discuss different types of rotations, e.g. stacked, simple compound, complex and how they can be used to manage weeds and herbicide resistance.

DAN BUERKLE

Dan Buerkle farms and ranches in Fallon County in SE Montana. He seeds about 2200 acres and has about 240 cows in a cow-calf operation. In 2005 he switched to a no-till continuous crop system and incorporated cover crops a couple years later. He has grown winter wheat, spring wheat, peas, safflower, corn, and canola for cash crops and a wide variety of cover crop species seeded in a mix, both after the cash crop is off and full season. Somewhat more intense cattle grazing is being utilized at least in part because of the cover crops.

SCOTT RAVENKAMP

Scott Ravenkamp farms in Lincoln and Elbert Counties in Colorado. Dryland farming typically includes a fallow year to build soil moisture for the following crop. It has been widely accepted that cover crops deplete available soil moisture needed to grow cash crops. However, recent intensive crop rotations have led to an understanding that more water may be lost to evaporation during fallow periods than is used to grow a crop. Scott will share his experience using "Full Flex Rotation" to manage dry land crops. His cropping system includes winter cereals, corn, sunflowers, proso millet along with both single and multi-species cover crops. Soil moisture is used efficiently by matching cash crops to seasonal rainfall. Farming in such a fragile environment presents many challenges in maintaining soil organic matter and erosion control.