

## Pennycress An Ideal Cover, Production Crop

CoverCress Inc. of St. Louis, Mo., has developed wild pennycress into a combination of a cover and production crop to improve soil without displacing other crops. They call it CoverCress.

"In the late 1990's, the USDA was looking for alternate sources of oilseed that could help manage food and feed concerns," says Chris Aulbach, farmer relations and agronomy representative for CoverCress. "They investigated many different options and pennycress was one they thought had potential."

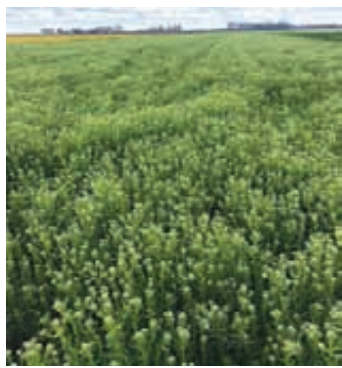
Aulbach explains pennycress is a winter annual with a high oil content that's been improved through domestication.

The company got its start in 2013. Initially, they gathered seed by driving the countryside and pulling wild pennycress out of ditches. Since then, the company has been concentrating on research and development, improving the qualities of the feed and oil content through breeding and gene editing.

"To be clear - CoverCress is first and foremost a grain crop. The cover crop value is added because it grows during the winter season," Aulbach says. "When crops are coming off in the fall, growers can plant CoverCress, and it won't be competing with corn or soybeans. Then it's harvested in the spring. It gives soil protection and captures nutrients."

In 2022, they'll be signing contracts for growers to raise their launch crop in central Illinois. It'll be their target area for the fall of 2022. The crop will be harvested in the spring of 2023.

He explains CoverCress Inc. will provide the seed to growers free of charge. Farmers will be tasked with fertilizing, planting and harvesting the crop.



**Pennycress is a winter annual with a high oil content that's harvested in the spring and gives soil protection and captures nutrients.**

"We want the grower to treat this crop like they would their other cover crops. The biggest difference is they don't have to buy the seed. The goal is to deliver bushels of grain that we'll all get paid for on the back end. We're going into this as a business venture, sharing the risk with the farmers because we're providing the seed."

"We're doing a scaled ramp up so 2022 will be phase one as we get more growers excited about the crop and establish more places to deliver the grain. The fall of 2023 will hopefully see more acres. Our goal is to be on several hundred thousand acres in the next few years, upward of a million in 5 to 10 years or less."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chris Aulbach, CoverCress Inc., 1249 N. Watson Rd., St. Louis, Mo. 63132 (ph 314-222-1403; info@covercress.com; www.covercress.com).

## His Hobby Is Restoring One-Horse Sleighs

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Dwight Boak purchased his first one-horse sleigh at a family auction about 18 years ago. It had been sitting in his cousin's granary and he paid \$75 for it.

"I kind of like antiques and sleighs are kind of neat to use for décor at Christmas," Boak says, explaining that he puts a restored sleigh outside of his St. Johns, Mich., farmhouse during the holidays.

After replacing some of the wood parts, sanding, priming, painting and adding new upholstery, the black sleigh with red accents turned out so well that he bought another one at a sale. He fixed it up and put it on Craig's List. An Ohio-based photographer bought it for \$700 to use as a prop at a mall for holiday photos of kids and pets.

It wasn't long before Boak became the "sleigh guy" and he got a few more leads on inexpensive sleighs for sale or as gifts from relatives. With each sleigh, Boak has gained experience and grown to appreciate the sleighs made in the late 1800's to early 1900's.

"The trim is really thin and steamed and bent. It's pretty hard to replicate," he says of the workmanship. He purchases 1/8-in "bendable" plywood and uses scraps he has on hand as needed.

Besides the four one-horse sleighs, he fixed



**Vintage one-horse sleighs restored by Boak on display in his barn in Michigan.**

up a one-horse box sleigh. With removable seats, it was used to carry goods as well as people.

Except for the holidays, he keeps the sleighs in a barn he turned into a gathering space for his daughter's wedding and parties.

Appropriately, one of his finds fits perfectly with his sleighs. When the Boaks purchased the property from relatives, he found a stone with a relative's name stenciled on it. Later, he figured out that it was likely heated and used as a foot-warming stone in a sleigh. The name ensured that when visiting and heating the stone at a neighbor's house, the owners got the right stone back.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dwight Boak, 9210 W. Pratt Rd., St. Johns, Mich. 48879 (ph 989-292-5544; christineboak@hotmail.com).

device. It's priced at \$1,799. Additional temperature sensors are priced at \$199 and humidity sensors at \$249.

Water meters vary in price from \$299 to \$549, depending on the size of the waterline. Meters are available for 1/2-in., 3/4-in., 1-in. and 1 1/2-in. lines.

BarnTools is working on additional sensors, including ones for noxious gasses, bin levels, and pit levels. "We are constantly researching customer needs and building and releasing new products to meet them," says Burroughs. "We are finding unexpected uses for our sensors, from greenhouses to dog kennels. We also believe a drastic drop or increase in water consumption could be a leading indicator of disease. Taking

immediate action could prevent a larger problem."

"We have a special offer for FARM SHOW subscribers," says Burroughs. "If they use the code FARMSHOWWATER at checkout or when calling us directly, they can get a free water meter with the purchase of a BarnTalk Starter Kit.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, BarnTools, P.O. Box 71066, Clive, Iowa 50325 (ph 515-220-2727; support@barntools.com; www.barntools.com).

## Easy Way To Monitor Water Use

A new water meter from BarnTools lets you monitor water usage from your cell phone or tablet. It's one of several sensors that are part of the BarnTalk Remote Farm Alarm and Livestock Monitoring System.

"You can check real-time sensor data, historical graphs, and custom thresholds," says Greg Burroughs, BarnTools. "It lets you monitor water flow into livestock barns and can help detect leaks."

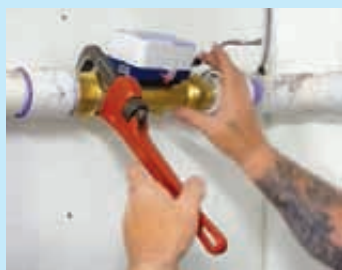
Like BarnTools' temperature and humidity sensors, the water meter is wireless. It communicates with a gateway device via long-range radio (LoRa). The gateway sends data to cloud-based servers via a built-in cellular connection. LoRa uses less energy than either Wi-Fi or Bluetooth systems. A single gateway can connect to practically unlimited nodes or sensors, while Wi-Fi can be limited to a handful of devices.

"Our data package is so small that it can still transmit even if cell service is so poor a person on site can't make a call," says Burroughs. "We also offer an upgraded antenna that can help at isolated sites."

Burroughs says the company has been testing its systems in barns around Iowa since the end of 2019. "We wanted to resolve connectivity concerns, durability, and reliability," he says. "Our monitors have been left outside during winters, storms, and hot summer weather."

To ensure reliability, a signal is sent to the gateway device every two min. A response indicates the system is working. If not, an alert is sent to the user.

The wireless water meter takes readings every 20 min. and automatically reports



**The BarnTalk water meter works where Wi-Fi or Bluetooth can be out of range to monitor usage.**

the reading to the user's smartphone. The BarnTalk system can track a rolling average over a 3-day period down to 24-hr. periods. Too much or too little water used can trigger different alerts to the user. Not having these alerts can cost far more than the BarnTalk system.

"In one use case, workers at a barn left early on a weekend and forgot to turn off the water, returned on Monday and turned it off," says Burroughs. "The additional 180,000 gal. of water in the pit increased the cost of pumping the pit by \$3,000. That didn't include the cost of pumping the water originally from the well."

A 30-hr. battery backup on the gateway ensures it can still send data even if power to the site is lost. It also ensures a power lost alert is sent. Temperature and water data can be vital for animal health and productivity, especially in extreme conditions.

A BarnTalk Starter Kit includes two indoor temperature sensors, an outdoor temperature sensor, a humidity sensor, and the gateway



**The wireless water meter takes readings every 20 mins. and reports back to a smartphone.**



**Pre-treated fly strips treat cattle as they use the mineral feeder.**

## Easy Feeder Fly Control

Insecticide strips from AmeriAg fit on the opening of their mineral feeders to offer hands-free fly control for cattle.

The treated strips are mounted to the feeder by drilling a hole at the top and using threaded kick-out rings (like a key ring) to hang the pre-treated strips.

Less costly and labor-intensive than other fly control methods, the strip kit sells for \$59.95 online, plus shipping.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, AmeriAg, 4824 Friendship Rock Creek Road, Burlington, N.C. 27215 (ph 877-551-4916; www.ameriag.com).