

Fulton Farm

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the soil and get the job done more effectively," he said. "If it can keep the weeds down,

it's a good system."

Steiman will also be applying the new method to a crop of winter squash this season.

Other cover crops Fulton Farm uses with success include wheat, oats, crimson

clover, and Austrian winter pea.

Beneficial insect populations are encouraged on the farm. In addition to naturally-found types, such as aphid-loving lady bugs, Steiman also purchases some species for targeting other problem pests. Pedicobious wasps, for example, "worked really well" last year in controlling Mexican bean beetles in the green bean crop, he said. The wasps lay eggs in the larvae of the bean beetle and effectively parasitize them.

A \$100 purchase of the parasitic wasps did a good job controlling the bean beetles in about 3,000 row feet of green beans, Steiman said.

In another example of its commitment to environmentally-friendly production, Fulton Farm is gearing up to make biodiesel fuel from used vegetable oil from the kitchen at Wilson College.

With the help of an engineer friend and a conical tank equipped with a circulating pump, Steiman will be able to produce 50 gallons of the re-

newable fuel in a day's time. The process uses methanol and a small amount of lye to separate glycerol and other substances from the vegetable oil, leaving pure biodiesel.

He plans to use the fuel to power the farm's irrigation pump, and will consider putting additional diesel-powered equipment to use on the farm. If the biodiesel project proves successful, Steiman said he would consider purchasing a diesel car, as well as selling the fuel to neighboring farmers, truckers, and diesel vehicle owners.

In another new project, Steiman built a portable hen house this winter using the chassis of an old wagon purchased locally for \$10. He has started a flock of about 20 layers, including Rhode Island Reds, Barred Rocks, Speckled Sussex, and Silkies. The pastured birds provide a learning experience for farm visitors and also some eggs for CSA members to take home with their veggies.

While the CSA concept fosters strong customer loyalty

and creates an efficient method for distributing produce, Steiman said the system also has its challenges, especially when the regular season rolls around in late April.

"The tricky thing with a CSA is that we have to pick a start date and have everything come together all at once," Steiman said on the first day of the regular CSA season. "The spinach was ready two weeks ago and the radishes are ready now."

Regardless of the timing glitches, CSA members arrived through the afternoon to fill bags and baskets with their weekly share of spring onions, spinach, mixed greens, tat soi, and white icicle radishes.

As the season progresses, their choices will widen to include carrots, peas, broccoli, strawberries, raspberries, cabbages, beets, tomatoes, sweet corn, beans, melons, cucumbers, garlic, pumpkins, potatoes, winter squash, and onions.



These hens provide pastured-poultry eggs to CSA customers as well as educational opportunities to students and farm visitors. Chicken breeds include Speckled Sussex (held here by Steiman), Rhode Island Red, Barred Rock, and Silky. The new portable henhouse is in back.



Composting horse manure in the trough underneath the seedlings provides heat to grow the young plants in winter and early spring.



Waste fryer oil from the kitchen at Wilson College is converted into biodiesel. The fuel in this sample can be seen at the top of the jar, above the glycerol on the bottom layer. Steiman plans to use the fuel to power the farm's irrigation pump as well as other uses on the farm.

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