

People & Places

# Couple finds success with cover crops

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

RUPERT, Idaho — The primary thing that drives decisions on Luke and Sara Adams' farm is sugar beets. The couple owns shares in the grower-owned Amalgamated Sugar Co., which allows them to grow a certain number of acres of the tuber crop for processing.

"A lot of our decisions are motivated by sugar beets and sugar beet production," Luke said.

That led to the couple's decisions to grow cover crops, first to boost nematode management and later to improve soil health and reap the benefits in the following cash crop.

Luke and Sara first started using cover crops when they returned to the family farm in 2012 after living in Colorado, where he was employed by the U.S. Air Force and she taught school.

They were hoping cover crops would help with pest management in their sugar beets.

"That was kind of the gateway for using cover crops," Sara said.

The first two years of cover crops were grown in a research project with the University of Idaho. The university researchers were interested in organic matter and helped design the cover crop mixes.

"Based on that success, we started to branch out on our own and do our own mixes," Luke said.



Luke and Sara Adams

**Luke and Sara Adams with their children, Joey and Adelynn, on their farm during the 2020 sugar beet harvest.**

Luke's father, Timm, had experimented with oilseed radish in 2010 to control pests in sugar beets.

"He knew it was something important, and we needed to incorporate it," Luke said.

In addition to the desire to reduce the sugar beet cyst nematode population on the farm, Luke and Sara believed the organic matter produced by cover crops would improve patches of high-calcium, poor soil in their field.

In addition to helping with those issues, cover

crops have reduced soil compaction, improved water infiltration and protected the soil against wind erosion.

"Noticeably, in this drought year, it was a snow catch," Luke said. The cover crops caught and held snow, and as a result the Adamses will go into planting season with more soil moisture.

They plant cover crops after they harvest their grain, malt barley and wheat crops. They graze the cover crops with their neighbors' sheep and direct seed sugar beets into the stubble in the spring. Direct seeding also reduces

erosion.

They plant cover crops on about 500 acres.

"Essentially, we do as much as we possibly can with the water we have," Luke said.

They'd like to be able to plant cover crops on all of their 2,000 grain acres, but water is a limiting factor. As they get better at choosing drought-tolerant cover crops and experimenting with water needs, those acres will increase, Luke said.

The farm wouldn't be as successful without cover crops, he said.



**Western Innovator**

**LUKE AND SARA ADAMS**

**Location:** Rupert, Idaho

**Co-owners:** Timm and Barbara Adams

**Acreage:** About 5,000, half of it leased

**Primary crops:** sugar beets, malt barley, potatoes, corn, wheat, alfalfa

**Business:** AgriTerre Seed

**Children:** Joey, 8, Adelynn, 6

The couple's success with cover crops led them to start another business, AgriTerre Seed, in 2015. That business has grown year after year and now offers a full line of seeds for cover crops, forage crops and corn. They also became a Pioneer dealer in 2019.

"The yield justifies the expense, as well as not using chemicals to handle nematodes," he said.

Cover crops have "become integrated into our cropping system. It's really just a matter of which fields and which will wait for next year," he said. "We target our least productive fields."



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# Aquaculture innovator appointed to NWAA board

Capital Press

The Northwest Aquaculture Alliance has appointed Langley Gace, Innovasea Systems senior vice president, to its board of directors.

Gace, a Bainbridge Island, Wash., resident, was formerly the president of Washington-based OceanSpar LLC, a pioneer in the development of submersible net pens for open ocean aquaculture.

In 2015, OceanSpar merged with Open Farm Technologies to form Innovasea Systems, a new company committed to developing the



**Langley Gace**

NWAA to promote the advancement of fish farming and shellfish production in the West Coast and Pacific regions.

"We need aquaculture to feed the world today and into the

next wave of innovative, open-ocean products to support the growing marine aquaculture industry.

Gace said he looks forward to serving on the leadership team of NWAA to promote the advancement of fish farming and shellfish production in the West Coast and Pacific regions.

"Today, the United States ranks 17th in the world in terms of aquaculture production currently import-

ing 80% of the seafood that we consume," he said.

The alliance "plays an important role in promoting the many benefits of responsible aquaculture while providing a platform for networking opportunities in the aquaculture sector," he said.

The current global political situation should serve as a call to action for policymakers and regulators to make aquaculture production a matter of national food security, he said.

"Today, the United States ranks 17th in the world in terms of aquaculture production currently import-

ing 80% of the seafood that we consume," he said.

Jim Parsons, NWAA board president, said the addition of Innovasea to NWAA and Gace to the NWAA Board is a key strategic step in helping amplify the voice of the people and the companies that are engaged in the responsible production of aquatic foods.

"Langley Gace is an internationally respected innovator who clearly understands the importance of aquaculture in feeding the world. We are honored to have him join the alliance," he said.

# Video promotes canola oil processing, counters misinformation

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

A new video from the Pacific Northwest Canola Association follows the crop as it goes from farm to table.

The target audience is consumers, farmers and industry members, said Karen Sowers, association executive director.

"There's a lot of misinformation out there in the media world about how canola oil is processed, or that it's bad for you," she said. "Our goal was to put to rest some of the misinformation and just tell it like it is, from when the seed gets put in the ground

to when it comes out of the production process."

The video focuses on canola delivered to the Viterra Oilseed Processing plant in Warden, Wash.

The association received funding from Viterra and a grant from the U.S. Canola Association's Promote Canola Acres program, Sowers said.

A previous video focused on canola's role in soil health improvement.



**Karen Sowers**

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST CANOLA ASSOCIATION**

<https://pnwcanola.org/>

Pacific Northwest farmers grew roughly 371,000 acres of the crop in 2021. Sowers expects acreage to increase.

"Seed supply is tight," she said. "Growers are being made aware — don't seed too early."

Several years ago, a late freeze forced farmers to replant.

"That may not be an option this year, as far as seed supplies," she said.

Southern Idaho is expected to be an area of new growth, with both spring and winter canola acres, she said. Sowers estimates there are 4,000 to 5,000 acres in six counties.

She's been hearing from Idaho and Washington winter canola farmers that "it looks pretty good, but boy the moisture needs to continue, for sure."

Last year's winter canola acres weren't affected too badly, but spring acres were impacted by drought last year.

"The snow has helped, the rain has helped, but we're also a year behind on moisture from not having it last year," Sowers said.

Spring canola planting will likely begin in the next month, Sowers added.

Montana's acreage is 90% spring canola. Idaho and Washington farmers plant roughly 70% spring canola. Oregon plants 80% winter canola.

The association may release shorter videos directed to a grower audience, including drill calibration and scouting for insect pests, Sowers said.

## CALENDAR

**WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY APRIL 6-9**  
**2022 Idaho FFA State Convention:** College of Southern Idaho, 315 Falls Ave., Twin Falls, Idaho. More than 1,400 FFA members from around Idaho will gather for this year's convention. Website: <https://bit.ly/3J2JAB1>

**TUESDAY APRIL 12**  
**Southern Idaho Livestock Hall of Fame Induction:** 6:30 p.m. Turf Club, 734 Falls Ave. Twin Falls, Idaho. The Southern Idaho Livestock Hall of Fame will honor its newest inductees on April 12 at the Turf Club during the organization's 61st annual banquet. Those inductees to be honored this year are: cattle producers Guy and Sherry Colyer of Bruneau, sheep producers Don and Patricia Pickett of Oakley, former Idaho State Brand Inspector Larry Hayhurst of Nampa and dairyman John Reitsma (posthumously) of Jerome. The banquet will open with social time at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets for the prime rib dinner are \$30 and can be reserved by calling Eric Bennett at (208) 320-5769.

**THURSDAY-SATURDAY APRIL 14-16**  
**Spring Fair:** Washington State Fairgrounds, 110 9th Ave. SW, Puyallup, Wash. Celebrate spring at the fair and all things agriculture. Website: <https://www.thefair.com>

**THURSDAY-SATURDAY APRIL 21-24**  
**Spring Fair:** Washington State Fairgrounds, 110 9th Ave. SW, Puyallup, Wash. Celebrate spring at the fair and all things agriculture. Website: <https://www.thefair.com>

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**THROUGH SATURDAY MARCH 26**  
**High Desert Stampede:** Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond, Ore. This annual ProRodeo Tour stop is going forward the last weekend in March as one of the top 60 rodeos in the country. We are expanding to three nights to give contestants and fans additional opportunities to participate. Let's rodeo! For the full schedule, go to the website: <https://bit.ly/33t2HE> Contact: 844-414-2242, [info@high-desertstampede.com](mailto:info@high-desertstampede.com)

**THROUGH SUNDAY MARCH 25-27**  
**Northwest Horse Fair and Expo:** 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. Linn County Fair and Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road E, Albany, Ore. The Northwest Horse Fair and Expo is a huge horse expo packed with family-friendly fun, exciting equine

entertainment and education. It features daily clinics with top-notch trainers and riders; Colt Starting Challenge USA; stunning stallions and beautiful breeds performing daily; giant trade show; and much more. More information: <https://bit.ly/3rvKaA9> or 765-720-2098.

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY MARCH 26-27**  
**Central Oregon Agricultural Show:** 9 a.m. Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond, Ore. Welcome to the first-ever Central Oregon Agricultural Show, featuring exhibitors, presentations, seminars and more. See you in Redmond! Website: <https://northwestagshow.com/> Phone: 800-882-6789

**SATURDAY-TUESDAY MARCH 26-29**  
**California FFA State Leadership Conference:** Golden 1 Center, 500 David Stern Walk, Sacramento, Calif. More than 7,000 FFA members will gather for this year's convention in Sacramento. Website: <https://bit.ly/3sgmiFr>

**TUESDAY MARCH 29**  
**National Cattlemen's Beef Association Legislative Confer-**

**SATURDAY APRIL 2**  
**Free Waste Pesticide Collection Event in Pendleton:** Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton, Ore. The Oregon Department of Agriculture through the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership is sponsoring a Free Waste Pesticide Collection Event. This event is an opportunity for landowners, farmers and other commercial pesticide users to rid storage facilities of unwanted or unused pesticide products. Registration for this event is required by March 23. Contact: Kathryn Rifenburg, 971-600-5073, [kathryn.rifenburg@oda.oregon.gov](mailto:kathryn.rifenburg@oda.oregon.gov) Website: <https://oda.direct/PSP>

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY APRIL 2-3**  
**Spring Farming Days at Pomeroy:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Garfield County Fairgrounds, 99 Fairgrounds Road, Pomeroy, Wash. Horse farming and antique equipment displays. No entry fee. Fun for the whole family. Contact: 509-566-7027