

# FROM THE GROUND UP

OCTOBER 2026  
PROJECT  
UPDATE

Making Conservation Practices Work For Farmers

## Y2 IMPACT REPORT

As we launch into Year 3 of the project, take a moment to reflect on how far we've come and some of the things we've achieved in the first 2 years.

Read and share our  
[Annual Impact Report!](#)



## WHAT HAVE THE WORKGROUPS BEEN DOING?

**Off-farm research:** We've completed our focus groups in two counties in Ohio and Missouri with farmers, public officials, and private agribusinesses about incentives/barriers to conservation practices. Look out for key takeaways on our website soon! We're now working on building visualizations of the watershed models that our Mizzou team have been building, for community workshops later in the project.

**Extension:** We've been working with our Farmer Leaders to host on-farm gatherings and tours, as well as attending events across Ohio and Missouri, including



Farm Science Review, Central State University's Land-Grant Open House, and University of Missouri's Northern REEC Field Day to share information about the FTGUp project

**National markets:** We're analyzing the fit of conservation practices chosen by farmers in FTGUp with existing public and private incentive schemes, and we've been working with our PMA team to keep pace with policy/markets developments.

**Education:** We hosted 8 undergraduate summer interns! The students were placed across both states and got to experience all areas of the project.



**Evaluation:** We're working with each of the workgroups to develop indicators of the impact they're making through the project, and we're gearing up for the 2027 statewide farm poll.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING ON-FARM THIS SUMMER?

### Lime and Mid-Summer Pasture Management

With the results of their baseline soil tests in hand, these farmers applied lime in late spring and the science team did a first round of forage sampling. Farmers mowed, rolled/crimped and trampled their treatment plots this summer and the team will be back to sample their forage again soon.

### Grain Cover Crops

After cover crop sampling this spring, the group grew corn and soybeans this summer. They met recently to discuss yield measurements and to agree upon seeding rates for their cover crops, and they've started planting their cover crops this fall.

### Daikon Radish Cover Crops

This summer the science team worked with these growers to monitor disease pressure in their specialty crops. The farmers have been monitoring their crop yields and have just planted their daikon radish cover crops.

### Seeding Warm Season Annuals into Pasture

This group sowed a diverse mix of treated seeds into their pastures this spring and the science team have been out twice this season to take samples. The teams are analyzing the data, but there seems to be better establishment this year!

### Alternative Soil Amendments

Following treatment application of their worm castings, a foliar applied biological, and urea this Spring, the science team took forage samples in April and May. The group waited for rain before applying their second round of treatments by drone in late September.

### Weather stations

Each farm has a weather station so we can assess how weather variability affects practice performance. However, we've been having some challenges with reliability and are embarking on a full maintenance campaign this fall.

### Cover Crop Strategies

With crop yield data provided by the farmers, the science team worked on baseline yield maps for 2025. The farmers planted their small seeded cover crops by drone in early August and are hoping for better growth than last year, because they've been getting more rain. Rye cover crops will go in after harvest.

### Winter Cover Crops

This group of specialty crop growers have been recording the vegetable yields from their treatment plots all summer. They've just chosen their cover crop mix and will be sowing it very soon.

### Fungicide Use Patterns

The science team has been disease scouting in this group's corn and soybean fields every week this summer, recording incidence and severity of the diseases these farmers are most interested in. The farmers will be recording their crop yields this fall.

### Legume Cover Crops

We've been sampling and taking measurements of clover in these complex organic rotations before it is mowed and harvested or plowed under. We'll be back out again before second cuttings this fall.

### Winter Annual Forages

These dairy farmers met recently to discuss plans for measuring silage corn yield this fall, and to confirm their seeding rates for their cover crop and winter forage crop (usually triticale) treatments.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR ON-FARM RESEARCH NODES:

[FTGUp.org/the-project/on-farm-research-nodes/](https://FTGUp.org/the-project/on-farm-research-nodes/)



## FARM GATHERINGS AND TOURS

FTGUp farmers are ambassadors for the project, and the heart of that ambassadorship this summer has been through farm gatherings and tours! Farmers lead these events and share knowledge about conservation practices with peer farmers and the community.

### Trotwood Incubator Farm



On August 4th, members of the FTGUp project met in Trotwood, Ohio for an evening farm gathering event. The event featured a tour of the Trotwood Incubator Site led by FTGUp farmers, Donee Boykin, founder of Endigo's Herbs and Organics, and Cheryl Wheeler, co-founder of Efinity Harvest farm.

The Trotwood Incubator Site provides growing space for beginning and established farmers, including three farmers who are part of the FTGUp project. The farmers are integrating winter cover crops into their specialty crop plots to study their effect on weed presence, soil health, and crop yields.

Farmers from other From the Ground Up nodes across Ohio joined the event. Cheryl noted, "Events like this remind us that the best ideas grow when we learn from one another."



### Ohio No Till Council Field Day

In early September, FTGUp Farmer Leader Fred Yoder hosted the Ohio No-Till Council at his farm for a field day focusing on soil health and cover crops. Despite the heat, there was a great turnout! We enjoyed connecting with other attendees, hearing from insightful speakers and farmer panelists, and sharing more about the FTGUp project with a Q&A session with farmer collaborator Josh Yoder, led by Research and Engagement Coordinator Julie Vredenburgh.



## WE'RE HIRING!

Join the FTGUp team as our project Communications Specialist (based at OSU, Wooster), or our Ohio Education Coordinator (based at Central State University)!

**Communication Specialist:** Apply [HERE!](#)

**Education Coordinator:** Apply [HERE!](#)



### Wayne County Dairy Tour

In mid-August, members of the Environmental Professionals Network embarked on a bus tour of Wayne County, Ohio. A key highlight of the tour was their stop at FTGUp Farmer Leader Greg Steffen's dairy farm!

Greg gave the group a walking tour of his farm, introducing them to his operation and sharing details of the research he's conducting alongside five fellow Wayne County farmers on growing triticale as a winter forage.



### SW Missouri Grazing Field Day



On September 24, ranchers from two FTGUp nodes (from North and Southwest Missouri) came together for a field day hosted by Adam Boman at his farm near Pierce City. The groups shared the conservation practices they are researching with each other, and their experiences so far, and they discussed baseline and first year data with the scientists.

We finished up the day with a tour of Adam's farm and research plots, where fall treatments had been applied by drone just the day before. A wonderful day of true collaboration between farmers and scientists - each person engaging and learning from everyone else there!

