

How do prairie strips influence soil health?

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- In order for prairie strips to be implemented as an effective conservation practice, we need to understand their effects on physical, chemical and biological soil properties.
- 1) How do prairie strips influence microbe-mediated nutrient cycling processes? 2) Can prairie strips introduce beneficial microbial taxa to surrounding row crop soil?
- Soil was collected at multiple distances from each prairie strip (Fig 1) and samples were analyzed for:
 - Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi
 - Microbial community composition
 - Active C
 - Soil protein
- Next steps: Assess mechanisms of microbial dispersal and abundance of genes involved in C/N cycling & pesticide degradation

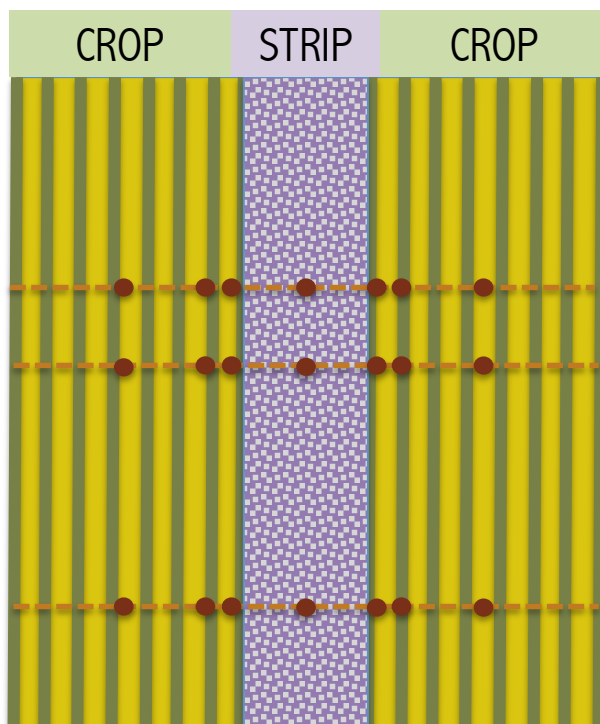


Figure 1. Sampling design – Soil cores were collected along 3 transects perpendicular to each prairie strip. Cores were collected in the center of the prairie strip and at multiple distances from the strip edge.