KISS THE GROUND FARMER GRANT ‘25-’26

Mud Ridge Ranch LLC
RED OAK, IOWA

The Plan

Matt Vermeersch set out to give former row crop land a new purpose at Mud Ridge Ranch. His plan: install perimeter fencing around 100 acres to introduce regenerative grazing, bring livestock back onto the landscape, and rebuild healthier pastures. By demonstrating a different approach to land management, he also hoped to inspire neighboring farmers to explore regenerative practices.

Challenges & Learnings

Turning former row crop fields into productive grazing land takes time and the right infrastructure. Without adequate fencing, managing livestock and giving the land time to recover was difficult. The project has shown Matt how combining different grazing strategies can create more flexibility throughout the seasons.

Adaptations

Matt is combining warm- and cool-season cover crops with virtual fencing to keep his cattle and sheep grazing longer. This multispecies approach is helping him make better use of the land while preparing former row crop fields for a future transition to native grasses.

Community Impact

Matt hopes his ranch can show neighboring farmers what’s possible when livestock and regenerative practices are brought back onto former cropland. By sharing his approach and opening conversations about land stewardship, he’s working to inspire other producers to explore new ways of caring for their land.

Results

With support from Kiss the Ground, Matt increased his fenced acreage by 150%, bringing 170 acres into an adaptive grazing system. By rotating cattle and sheep through seasonal cover crops, he extended his grazing season by more than two months last year. The ranch is now using these practices to prepare former row crop ground for native grasses, building toward a more resilient landscape.

BIGGEST IMPACT

EXTENDED GRAZING



“Thanks to Kiss the Ground, I was able to increase our fenced area by 150% and extend our grazing season by over two months last year!”

– MATT VERMEERSCH
MUD RIDGE RANCH LLC