

Flip, Fly, Drum: Cirque Kalabanté comes to Fairfield

Lindsay Bauer, Fairfield Arts & Convention Center

FAIRFIELD — Prepare to be swept away by the explosive energy and dazzling spectacle of Cirque Kalabanté: Afrique en Cirque, coming to the Fairfield Arts & Convention Center for one unforgettable eve-

ning on Saturday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m.

This high-energy production, created by Guinean artist Yamoussa Bangoura, fuses gravity-defying acrobatics with live Afro-jazz rhythms, traditional West African dance, and stunning choreography, offering audiences of all ages an

exhilarating cultural experience unlike any other.

“Cirque Kalabanté is more than a performance — it’s a celebration of life, strength and resilience,” says Bangoura. “Audiences will feel the pulse of West Africa through vibrant music, bold movement

and breathtaking feats of physical artistry.”

With world-class acrobats flipping, soaring and balancing to the beat of live percussion and the soulful melodies of the kora, a traditional West African string instrument, Afrique en Cirque transcends borders and connects hearts in a night of unforgettable entertainment.

“This is the kind of show people talk about for years, the kind that makes you sit forward in your seat and say, ‘I can’t believe what I’m seeing,’” says Fairfield Arts & Convention Center’s Executive Director Lindsay Bauer. “Cirque Kalabanté is thrilling, joyful, and absolutely electric from start to finish. We can’t wait for our Southeast Iowa community to get to share it with us.”

Tickets range from \$29-\$57 and are available online or by calling the Box Office at 641-472-2787.

Perfect for families, thrill-seekers and lovers of world culture,

Afrique en Cirque invites Fairfield audiences to embark on a joyous

winter escape filled with rhythm, color and heart-stopping performance



Cirque Kalabanté is thrilling, joyful, and absolutely electric from start to finish.



Cirque Kalabanté: Afrique en Cirque will be performing in Fairfield Saturday, Jan. 31.

Even as cover crop acres grow in Iowa, consistency lags

New research from Iowa State University, that builds on research released last fall, finds that only 6.6 percent of cover crop users plant them consistently; nearly 30 percent are ‘intermittent adopters’

By Olivia Cohen

Although the number of acres of cover crops planted statewide is continuing to grow, Iowa producers aren’t consistently using them.

Over a five-year survey, researchers from Iowa State University found that nearly 30 percent of Iowa farmers surveyed said they go back and forth between using cover crops on their land from year to year.

While the researchers found that the share of Iowa farmers who were planting cover crops over the study’s five-year period did increase from 17.7 percent to 22.9 percent, many farmers stopped using the conservation practice after initially adopting it.

The study was measured in three categories: continuous adopters which made up 6.6 percent, intermittent adopters were about 28.9 percent and continuous nonadopters made up 64.5 percent of the farmers interviewed.

J. Arbuckle, professor of rural sociology at ISU and one of the lead researchers for the study published in the Journal of Soil and Conservation, said the number of farmers using cover crops then disadopting them shows how farmers’ relationship with the practice continues to change.

The “dynamic shifting between adoption categories was higher than I thought it was going to be, and more dynamic than I thought it was going to be,” he said.

This comes as the number of acres planted with crops continues to grow in Iowa.

About 1.2 million acres of cover crops were planted statewide in 2022, per data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That number jumped in 2024, when Iowa farmers planted about 3.8 million acres of cover crops. Despite that growth, the number of acres planted in cover crops still is just a fraction of the 30 million acres of farmland in Iowa.

Nationwide, in 2022, nearly 18 million acres, or 4.7 percent of total U.S. cropland, had cover crops, up 17 percent from 2017.

“The reason why we’re not seeing a lot like the reason why our increase in cover crops use is so slow is that a lot of the people that try them subsequently discontinue,” Arbuckle said. “The big picture take home from

this research is that we really have to focus on the post-adoption decision making.”

This recent study builds upon research ISU published in September highlighting cover crop disadoption rates. Their first study, which The Gazette wrote about in October, tracked farmers’ attitudes toward cover crop practices over two years. The second study tracked farmers over three different surveys across a five-year period. The newly published study included 519 Iowa farmers.

A NEED FOR MORE CONSERVATION SUPPORT

As cover crops have grown in popularity, mainly for conservation purposes, financial support has become more available.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship’s cost share program is open to both first time and returning participants to help fund cover crops. First time users were eligible for \$30 per acre, while returning participants could receive up to \$20 per acre. The program caps participants’ funding at 160 acres.

Arbuckle said the study’s findings illuminate Iowa farmers’ need for more support to maintain their cover crop practice, in addition to initial funding support.

Arbuckle said this is important because of how strained many farmers are between tight margins, market uncertainty and high input costs.

“When times are good

and farmers are making profits, there’s wiggle room to fit something in, like cover crops,” Arbuckle said. “But when most farmers are looking at potential breakeven or losses this year coming up, and the thought of using cover crops is really hard.”

A SLOW PAY OFF

Arbuckle said it usually takes several years for the benefits of cover crops to accrue.

He said if a farmer stops using cover crops for a year, they might not lose all the soil health progress they had been making, but pausing cover crops for a few years can “reduce the benefits that have been accruing over time.”

Although the number of acres planted in cover crops continues to grow, Arbuckle said Iowa is “not anywhere close to where we need to be” to meet conservation goals.

According to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, the state needs to plant 12.6 million acres of cover crops to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus from running off into Iowa’s waterways and contributing to the “dead zone” in the Gulf of Mexico, which President Donald Trump has renamed the Gulf of America.

“The differences between the continuous adopters and the intermittent adopters point to ways that we might help to increase comfort levels with cover crops, increase the capacity for farmers to use cover crops over time and it points to the need for changes in terms of programs and policies to maybe extend,” Arbuckle said. “We know that most farmers would love to have 30 extra dollars per acre around to plant cover crops. But they don’t these days, so we’ve got to figure out creative strategies to help them do it.”

Olivia Cohen covers energy and environment for The Gazette and is a corps member with Report for America, a national service program

that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues. She is also a contributing writer for the Ag and Wa-

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Cattle graze on a mix of plants that make up a cover crop on a field at the Rohdale Institute in Marion on Oct. 3, 2025. The mix of plants are clover, radishes, Japanese millet and oats. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)



Dan Voss plants cover crops on his land near Palo on Nov. 8, 2023. Voss has implemented conservation practices on his land since the 1980s. (Nick Rohlman/The Gazette)



J. Arbuckle, Iowa State University

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