

Adding Winter Small Grains to a Corn and Soybean Rotation

- Plan ahead
 - Have an idea of what you want to try
 - Vegetable producers plan for how many crops? We should be able to plan for just one more.
- Have a goal
 - Extra forage, erosion control, water quality, scavenging nutrients, increasing organic matter, soil biological activity, etc.
- Start simple
 - Throw some winter rye seed over soybeans before leaf-drop, just see what happens
 - Try five acres, ten acres, or one, just try it

Adding Winter Small Grains to a Corn and Soybean Rotation-Planting

- Pre-establishment concerns
 - Herbicide carryover, check your chemical labels
 - Maturity of primary crop, is it too “long” to give adequate time for cover crop establishment
- Equipment needs
 - Some equipment is hard to find (like a no-till small grain drill)

Adding Winter Small Grains to a Corn and Soybean Rotation-Planting

- Seed variety and quality
 - Buy quality seed and be sure to check the germination
 - VNS seed can work just fine depending on your cover crop goals
 - If you are buying over the phone, you can always ask for a copy of the seed tag emailed to you before you buy
- Planter settings
 - Seeding depth is much more critical with small grains, get out of the tractor and check
 - Check your planting rate multiple times, it can dramatically change your costs if you plant too high of a rate

Adding Winter Small Grains to a Corn and Soybean Rotation-Killing

- Control spring growth
 - Don't let it get over 8" tall (unless you can graze it aggressively)
 - Failure to control spring growth is a good way to risk potential yield reduction in your primary crop
- Plan on using multiple methods of control
 - Grazing + tillage, grazing + chemical, chemicals?
- Terminate well before planting corn
 - At least 14 days, more is better

Grazing Cover Crops

- Just an “extra” benefit to covers that we livestock producers get to enjoy.



Grazing Cover Crops

- A great way to immediately realize the economic value of a cover crop (oat & crimson clover following winter wheat)

# Head	Lbs/day	Lbs/total (50 days)	Tons	Price	Value
9	13.5 (*9)	6,075	3.04	\$200	\$608
14	31.25(*14)	21,875	10.94	\$200	\$2188

Bales	Type	Weight	Price	
500	Sm Sq	50lbs	\$6	\$3,000
6	Stacks	2.5 tons	\$200	\$3,000

Or \$139.62/acre

Grazing Cover Crops-Termination

- With Herbicide
 - Make sure to have adequate leaf area to absorb the chemical you are applying
 - Use some type of surfactant/penetrant as a spray additive
- With Tillage
 - Till as soon after grazing as is practical
 - You may still have to use a chemical
 - Tillage may not be in line with your original goals for using a cover crop

Cover Crops- Manure application

- Choosing Manure Types
 - Composted turkey litter works great, cattle bedding doesn't work so well
 - Quality of manure spreader has an effect as well
- Spreading Rates
 - 4 tons/acre composted turkey litter is hardly noticeable
- Cautions
 - Depending on spreader type, you will likely kill more cover crop with wheel traffic than by smothering under manure
 - Control traffic patterns, maximize spread width, and use common sense