

Fitting Flax in the Rotation

In 2007 **Paul and Karen Mugge** (Sutherland) carried on a line of questioning researched earlier by Kathleen Delate, ISU Organics Specialist. Paul wanted to know where to put flax in the crop rotation and how to prepare the ground. An unreplicated demonstration gave him a good idea how to proceed.

Experience has shown flax needs to go where weed pressure is light. So Paul thought triticale might choke out any weeds that could go to seed and interfere with a subsequent crop of flax. But Kathleen's research has indicated flax responds to the nitrogen left behind by alfalfa and soybeans. Table 14 shows that in 2007, the flax after soybean did much better than flax after triticale. Paul says most of his 2008 flax will follow soybeans.

But Paul was also encouraged with the hand-harvest yields of the no-till flax. He plans to try more no-till seeding of flax following fall tillage.

Table 14. Mugge Demonstration of Flax Tillage and Rotation Effects.

Description	Yield Lbs/A	Input Cost
Following Soybean, Fall Tilled	1,159	\$5.83
Following Triticale, Fall Tilled	661	\$12.11
Following Triticale, No-Tilled	493	\$0.00
Following Triticale, Spring Tilled	526	\$17.94
Following Triticale/ No-Till/Hand-Harvested	946	\$0.00