



What's winter farming all about?

Small Grains Production and Marketing

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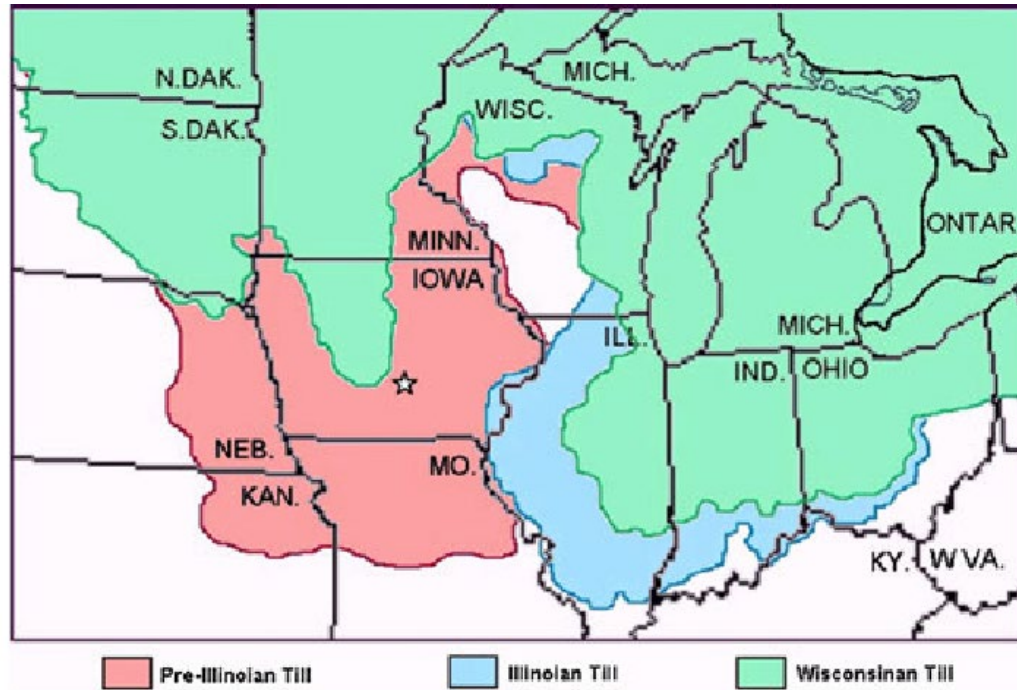
8/15/2019

Disclosure / Conflicts / Off Label: No Relevant Disclosures or Conflicts of Interest, please refer to relevant chemical labeling and applicable legislation

Farming Shallow Soils of SE Wisconsin



Glacial Outwash Plains are Common

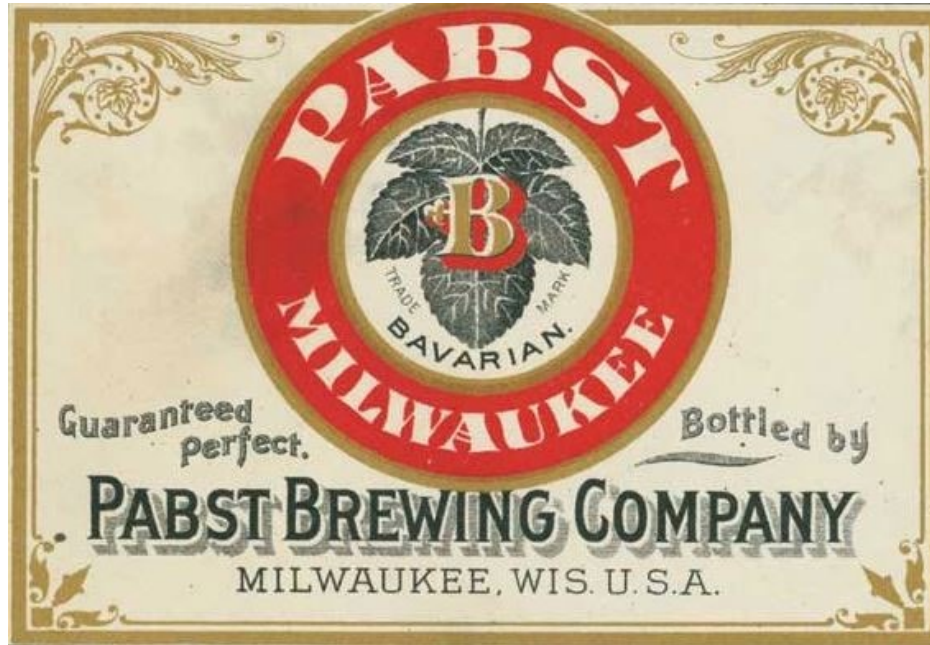


Historically, upper Midwest Grew Small Grains



The Great Chicago Fire Boosted Small Grains in WI







Long
Winter
Farm



Despite Explosive demand

- Wisconsin soils had been depleted by the 1860's
- wheat rust disease and chinch bugs lead to series of crop failures - forcing farmer west to new ground in Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakota
- Cattlemen and dairy farms remained, and forages began to supplant small grain acres in Wisconsin, followed by corn, Levi P. Gilbert of Fort Atkinson built the first silo in Wisconsin in 1872 , leading to increased corn production
- The wheat/small grain industry in Iowa was short lived, but filled a gap as farmers moved West to more arid ground

- My Crop Rotation and Methods
- My Marketing Plan
- Do and Don'ts
- Things That Keep Me Up at Night

Rotation

Non-Organic

Corn-soy-corn-soy-small grain , etc

Organic

Corn-(rye+legume double crop)-Corn-Small Grain, etc

Tillage Practices

Non-Organic

Corn-soy - strip/notill

Fall small Grains - Vertical Till vs single pass finishing disk

Spring Seeded - Plowdown of overwintered cover with very heavy disk

Organic

Corn - Mid-May plow-down of overwintered cover, typically rye

Fall Seeded Grains - Very Heavy disk, then secondary tillage, then seeding

Spring Seeded - Plowdown of overwintered cover with very heavy disk

Strip Till



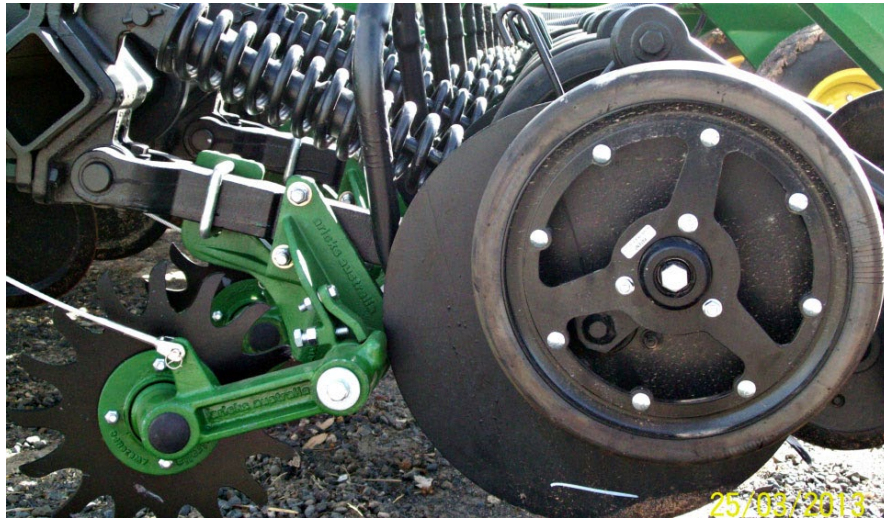
Plowdown with Heavy Disk in lieu of Moldboard



Left is Wishek Disk , Right is Sunflower Disk

Why Tillage?

Small grains do NOT like heavy residue. You must choose between equipping your planter with additional residue clearing device, or just rye to bury some of it.



Aricks Wheel: Row Cleaner / Residue Manager
BPR Engineering

Why Tillage?

In organic system - composting in place, aka “sheet mulching” , “sheet composting”

Goal: Grow as much biomass in off-season and incorporate/terminate as shallow as possible.

No-till organic soybeans



Is do some crimping, but I happen to have a market for rye, so.... I have to be a bit more creative

Where I am headed



John Kutz of Fort Atkinson

For the Meantime - VT, then Drill



Feed the Beast



Pelletized Manure - Organic

Get it off - QUICK!



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Most Whea Heads to End Users in WI



... or onto rail



The DeLong Co., Inc.



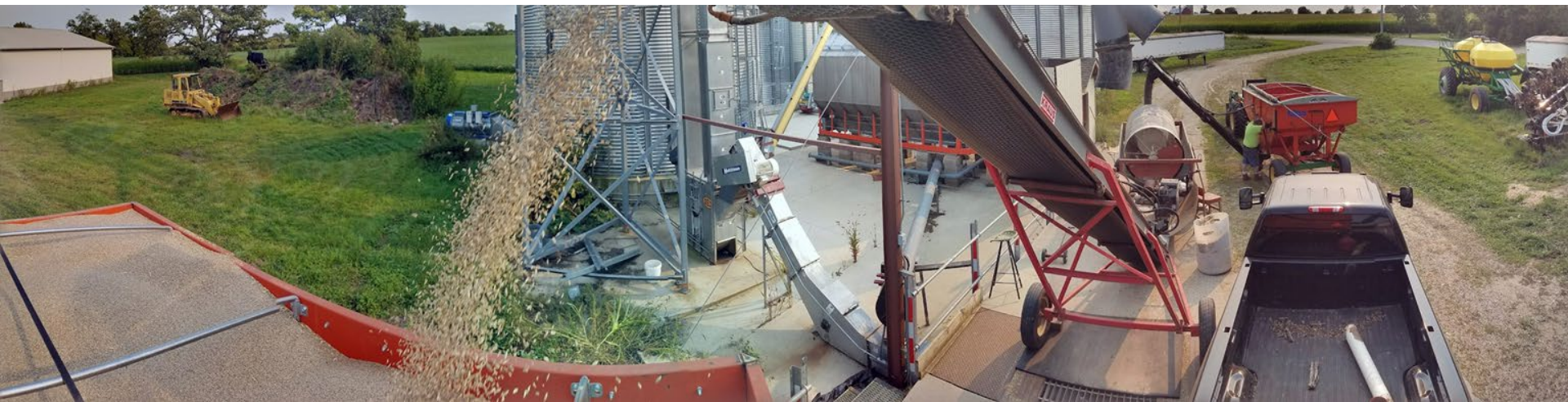
Marketing Strategy

Small grain is labile - and has local premium to fill orders to end users. Stay informed

Work with any elevator to keep informed of sales opportunities.

Many times, fall contracting allows for premiums, and will allow you to set acres based on revenues.

My niche is delivering “value added”



Grain cleaning to spec



Dirty Business



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DO



- Have sufficient tillage and seeding equipment
- Have the ability to fertilize multiple times (or the ability to hire it done)
- Only plant modern varieties unless some crazy high premium is locked into an iron clad contract (otherwise you just make expensive cow feed)
- Have the ability to handle a separate commodity during the summer months
- Have the ability to adapt to customer needs - BUT ALSO THE ABILITY TO STAND YOUR GROUND regarding variety, practices, deliver schedule, contract specs
- Use growth regulator for high-yield goals. Use fungicide, broadleaf control, etc
- Use a Tine weeder in organic plots
- Plan 1.2-1.5 million seed per acre. 2 million if getting late

DO



Have the ability to reclean / re - fan grain

Use your combine to re-clean grain in a pinch!

Have an assortment of augers to facilitate recleaning (needed for contract spec, to reduce VOM).

DO



Use red clover as frost seeded companion crop - it will provide up to 100# or better of nitrogen for following corn crop

Use the best possible methods to distribute fertilizer, and frost seeded companions. If you do not get your clover even - you will essentially be applying WAY to much N the following year to try and even it out.

ALWAYS apply a cover crop immediately after small grain harvest, even supplementing frost seeded companions.

Do NOT

Plant late in the fall and expect a crop

“Just throw it in”. You will lose money.

Skimp on early N - for organic, that means factoring in a quick release N source.
Fall tillering is important.

Allow for desiccation or drowning. (meaning pLant trees, drain you land)

Do NOT

Skimp on spring N

Overapply N (jeez, just can't win)

Skip fungicide if predicted yield response

<https://rusttracker.cimmyt.org/>

Plant older / susceptible varieties “because they were cheap”.

Do NOT

Consider small grains if you like July vacations, or have a problem cancelling all plans to take off small grains because they matured early / late

Fill up your summer applying various foo foo juice / snake oil to your corn and beans, only to be overwhelmed by small grain management.

Plant a single acre unless you know how / where to get rid of it. (work with your elevators, you can simple book some railcars to get to better markets)

Do NOT

- Forget to have free bin open during harvest. You may need to cool/temper you grain, or event dry it with aeration, or store for recleaning
- Use bins that do not have a full floor aeration. (Just spend the money)
- Wait until the day before your need to combine to pull out the combine.
- MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLANT OR HARVEST (Wheat = Early October, Barley / Oats = March)

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Things That Keep Me Up at Night

Small grains are a way to farm the 7 months out of the year that you don't have warm-season grains in the grounds

That also means - you will watch the weather all year round, not for good reasons, just because you will have a crop in the ground through 7 months of misery



Things That Keep Me Up at Night

If you prefer to apply snake oil all summer long to poorly bred hybrids, and head out for a month to fish, or just want to open you shed doors in April , do not start small grain farming.

If you do not want to improve your grain setup, or own grains bin, do not even consider small grain farming.

You have to have a plan B if you original buyer backs out.



Things That Keep Me Up at Night

If you want to make money in small grains, you'll probably need to have a direct (or nearly direct) relationship with an end user (Breweries, distilleries, mills, feedlots ... and all of the above)

You should probably sell the straw - I cut it high, let it get a rain on (to wash out the Potash) then re-cut it.

It will take more labor, time, machines to do it right, and prepare for contingencies, than say someone out West, or in Kentucky. You have different soils and different climates.



Use Nervous Energy!

As you pine all winter, find shop projects that will make production of small grains easier, more profitable, more reliable. Learn to fabricate for yourself

Use that LONG winter to find customer, make relationship, understand their needs.

ADD VALUE to small grains. You can't complain about the middlemen in the food business if you are not yourself trying to become one. The value chain is there for you, find a way to grab on. No enduser, excepting the feedlot, wants your dirty grain

Shameless Plug



I have 6,000 bushel of new crop cereal Rye that will be tagged through Wisconsin Crop Improvement as Certified Seed.

It is a very impressive lineage. Rye is in shortage, and I want to offer this to PFI associated first.

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