



**RESEARCH
 PROTOCOLS**

**Spring Seeding Date for Cereal Rye for
 Weed Control in Organic Soybeans**

Objective: Determine the effect of spring seeding date of a cereal rye cover crop (seeded prior to planting soybeans) on weed pressure and soybean yield when the rye is allowed to persist as a companion to the soybeans.
Hypothesis: An earlier spring seeding date of cereal rye will produce more biomass, lessen weed pressure but not affect soybean yields compared to a seeding date closer to the time of soybean planting. Spring-seeding a cereal rye cover crop may prove to be an effective weed control measure for organic soybean production.

Farmer-Cooperator will:

- Take photos throughout the project and keep in contact with PFI with updates and questions.

Establish treatments

- **Spring 2019**, establish at least 4 replications of the seeding date treatments as shown below.
 - **Early: Seed cereal rye cover crop as early as possible in spring**
 - **Late: Seed cereal rye cover crop just prior to planting soybeans**
 - **Control: no cover**
- Strips will be as wide as at least one combine pass and run the length of the field.
- Plant soybeans to all strips on the same date.

Measurements

- **Summer 2019**
 - Take photos of trial progress.
 - One month after planting soybeans: Collect aboveground biomass samples of cover crop (see next page for more detail).
 - June: Take soybean stand counts from each strip (see next page for more detail).
 - Document weed pressure and weed control measures for each strip.
- **Fall 2019**
 - Harvest soybeans from each strip individually.
- Turn in all info and data pertinent to this trial to Practical Farmers of Iowa by the end of the project.

Early	Late	Control									
REP 1			REP 2			REP 3			REP 4		

Practical Farmers of Iowa will:

- Help set up monitoring protocol, monitor progress of project and provide support when needed.
- Publish results in a PFI research report, on PFI website and potentially other outlets.
- Provide \$550 honorarium after all data is submitted at conclusion of the project in 2019.

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Summer Data Collection Details

One month after planting soybeans: Collect aboveground biomass samples of cover crop.

- Collect at least one sample from each strip
- Randomly place 1'x1' PVC square in strip
 - Use shears to clip all aboveground plant material from within the square
- Place all samples from a single strip into one paper bag (e.g., one paper bag per strip)
 - Label paper bags accordingly
 - Number of squares sampled from (e.g., 3 squares = 3 ft²)
 - Date of collection
- Send paper bags to PFI office
 - Samples will be dried and weighed.

June: Take stand counts in each strip

- Take stand counts from 3 random locations in each strip.
 - Count and record number of plants from within 1/1000 of an acre:

Row-width	Length of row to count from
30 in.	17 ft, 5 in.
15 in.	34 ft, 10 in.
10 in.	52 ft, 3 in.
7.5 in.	69 ft, 8 in.

- For narrow, drilled rows, consider using the hula hoop method.
 - Randomly toss hoop into strip and count the number of plants inside the circle.
 - Note diameter of hoop.

For more info, consult this website:

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/discoveryfarms/2010/05/taking-a-stand-count/>