

Interseeding Principles

- 1. The primary objective of interseeding is getting covers started earlier**, resulting in increased diversity (able to plant covers that cannot be planted post-harvest) and improved soil health. Chances of moisture in mid-June are greater than early September.
- 2. Seed covers when corn is between V4 and V6**, typically, about 5-6 weeks after corn planting. Soybeans are “work in progress” – a much bigger challenge.
- 3. Commonly used covers – annual ryegrass, crimson clover, red clover, radishes, hairy vetch & cowpeas.** Other covers may work in a specific region, but more work is needed to confirm what will work in specific areas.
- 4. Cover crops may be seeded by broadcast or drilled.**
 - A. Broadcasting** the seed places the seed on top of the ground. Moist soil and/or a rain is needed for germination. However, regions which typically have these conditions, especially with higher organic matter soils, normally get along fine with broadcasting the seed.
 - B. Drilling** provides better seed-to-soil contact, better seed germination will occur under less than ideal moisture conditions, and the seeding rate can be reduced. Drilling may result in better stands, especially in low organic matter or sandy soils.
- 5. Residual herbicides** used and rates are very important. Atrazine used at less than 1 lb/ac (high pH soils are the exception), 1 pt Outlook, 12 oz of Verdict or 3 oz of Sharpen will work. Residual herbicides need to be selected for grass, legume or brassica cover crop.
- 6. Cover crops** will typically get about **6” tall and go dormant** due to corn shading. Then, once the corn starts drying down and additional light gets to the covers, growth begins again.
- 7. There are no known field/plots (when seeded after V4) that have resulted in a yield reduction.** Typically, there is **no yield difference**. On occasion, there is a small yield increase the year of interseeding.

continued on back



Interseeding into corn.



Interseeding results.



Interseeding post harvest.

For more information, including a detailed management guide for ryegrass as a cover crop, check the website of the Oregon Ryegrass Commission:

RyegrassCovercrop.com



Interseeding Principles *(Continued)*

- 8. Corn populations less than 35,000** and seeded between V4 and V6 have been very successful.

However, seeding in corn populations greater than 35,000 (with horizontal leaf architecture) have sometimes died in August due to too much shading. (Seeding V3-V5 may be needed, additional research is needed)

- 9. The Northern Corn Belt has greatest potential** for this practice. Higher summer temperatures and soils with less water holding capacity may determine how far South this may work.
- 10. Improved weed control** has frequently been observed with interseeding but no detailed research has been done on this.
- 11.** Corn silage can be taken off on fields that were interseeded but wet soils at the time of chopping may damage the stand.
- 12.** Seed corn can also have covers interseeded, but residual herbicides, traffic at detasseling and male row destruction and harvest may cause stand loss.
- 13.** Interseeding has been used for a number of years by some Midwest growers. Penn State, South Dakota State, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ontario, Quebec and others have been doing research for several years. Although it is not common many growers in the Midwest, New York and Pennsylvania have been having success the last 4 to 5 years.
- 14. Interseeding was very common back in the 1920s and 1930s** when legumes were seeded at the same of the last cultivation (horses pulling the row cultivator).



Annual Ryegrass, Radish and crimson clover, June 20, 2018.

What goes around-comes around.

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