

# Oregon Annual Ryegrass

## Using Annual Ryegrass vs. Cereal Rye Grain:

- More Roots
- Germinates and Canopies Faster
- Lower Carbon-to-Nitrogen Ratio Than Cereal Rye Grain

“ Annual ryegrass canopies more quickly than cereal rye in the fall and I like having a heavy cover in the fall and a thin cover in the spring. ”

**Loran Steinlage** - *Strip-tills corn, no-tills soybeans and grows wheat and cereal rye.*

“ Cereal rye can really get away from you in the spring. There's less risk of that with annual ryegrass. ”

**Donn Branton** - *Donn and his son, Chad, grow field corn and sweet corn, soybeans, winter wheat, oats, alfalfa, peas for processing and dry edible beans.*



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

**RyegrassCovercrop.com**



### Loran Steinlage: Uses Annual Ryegrass in Mixes on Critical Areas

I use annual ryegrass in mixes on critical areas like washouts and Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and as a nurse crop with alfalfa. I had been using oats as a nurse crop with alfalfa but there's more tonnage with annual ryegrass in alfalfa than with oats in alfalfa. Annual ryegrass seems to have more and finer roots than cereal rye grain and ryegrass needs minimal incorporation.

Annual ryegrass has winterkilled so I've gone to including cereal rye. With a thin stand of cereal rye in the spring you don't get quite the green mat (to plant into).

It was wet in the spring of 2013 and cereal rye got really tall. Some the farmers in the area let it go to seed because they were afraid they couldn't kill the cereal rye with herbicides.

We seed five pounds an acre of annual ryegrass drilled on highly erodible areas with other cover crops, as well as five pounds an acre when we use it as a nurse crop with alfalfa.

I am seeing a positive (yield) response on corn inter-seeded with annual ryegrass and clover. I like how annual ryegrass inter-seeded into corn goes dormant during summer heat.



**Loran Steinlage**  
*Steinlage Farms*  
*West Union, Iowa*

### Donn Branton: Annual Ryegrass is Less Risky Than Cereal Rye Grain

Cereal rye can really get away from you in the spring. There's less risk of that with annual ryegrass. And ryegrass has good, deep roots. Compared to cereal rye, annual ryegrass has a lower carbon-to-nitrogen ratio.

When it comes to planting and to terminating a cover crop – including one with annual ryegrass – we've learned that we want the cover crop either green as grass or dead and dry like straw when we plant into it.



**Donn Branton**  
*Donn & Yvonne*  
*Branton Farms*  
*Le Roy, New York*

Otherwise, the cover crop is ropery and it will wrap around coulters and also create hair-pinning.

We believe the cover crop helps us in a wet spring by sucking up moisture. We apply the herbicide just before planting corn.



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