



ADVANCED AG SYSTEMS'

Crop Soil News

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"It is the crops that feed the cows that make the milk which creates the money."

The Brick Wall of 2015

Winter triticale has a major role in forage production across the whole Northeast and Canada. There are some very promising new varieties coming that with normal rainfall will boost yields. There are some new seed treatments that will control snow mold and may allow for a slightly reduced seeding rate due to the optimum fall growth. And finally, in spite of the major loss of yield this year, forage harvested at flag leaf was very high quality and still the best forage we can grow in the area.



No-till seedings into harvested triticale stubble was a savior in 2015 as heavy rains washed out conventional seedings.

Advanced Ag Systems
Research, Education, Consulting

This spring has been the perfect storm in much of the northeast for winter forage production. We got a good fall start with early planting and sufficient nitrogen for optimum tiller formation. The heavy and prolonged snow did cause some snow mold and ice sheeting losses in parts of the fields. The problem was that all that preparation hit a brick wall this spring. Bitter cold and snow held on until the last week of April. A week after the last snowfall, we were in the upper 80's and pushing 90. This rushed the plant through its normal stages of growth and matured the crop in 3 weeks instead of the normal 6 – 8 weeks. Adding insult to injury, we had one of the driest springs on record. At the research farm, from green up to harvest, we had one rain of 0.20 inches and a second of 0.10 inches. This drastically reduced the dry matter production. While yields are normally in the 2 – 4.25 tons of dry matter range, many of our plots were only 30% of that! Some of my plots had less than 300 lbs. of dry matter/acre yield. Although discouraging, (and messed up a major research trial I had), there were pockets that showed the crop can yield with proper conditions. One farm near lake Ontario, where the water kept the temperatures cooler and where more frequent showers occurred, had yields equal or exceeding the normal 3.5 to 4 tons of dry matter. Farmers in Virginia reported very heavy crops from the winter forage – to the point it was a challenge to get it dry. In the northwest where they had a very open and warm winter, the triticale tillered all winter and then with the bountiful rains, gave a huge crop.

If all this wasn't enough, as soon as we went to start seeding into the stubble, it started raining. Tillers that could not grow before and so were not cut off, immediately sprouted (photo at right). It was not enough to harvest but enough to compete



with the seedings and soybeans planted no till into the stubble. It was very beneficial to apply preplant glyphosate at a low rate and high carrier/acre after the rains (0.5 inches rain followed by 1.4 inches and then more) got everything growing. Where we sprayed and then no-tilled the alfalfa or red clover, we have excellent stands with few weeds (top photo on right and front page). Where we skipped this step we have the legumes established but had a significant (but not worth harvesting) competing crop of winter triticale tillers that were suppressed by the previous lack of water.

Based on this and earlier year's work, we can directly no-till the legumes and soybeans into stubble. It has a major advantage when the field has long or steep slopes. Every farmer has experienced planting a seeding into a smooth (stone picked) field and then before the stand is up, or while the legumes are still small; get a gully washing downpour that removes a tremendous amount of soil and seedlings. This causes both short term yield loss from the poor stand of legume, and long term loss of the most fertile part of your soil. No tilling into the stubble leaves both a surface residue to break the raindrop impact and a massive root system that prevents or reduces surface and gully erosion (middle picture at right). No-tilled your seeding into stubble provides both a surface and subsurface protection from downpours (lower picture on right and top of previous page).

Teaming up with the triticale is the summer crop planted after winter forage harvest. Our research this year is focusing on management of 85-89 day brachytic dwarf BMR forage sorghum for silage. The purpose is to maximize the milk/ton and milk/acre of the summer crop while maximizing the yield of the winter forage that has more milk/ton than any of the other crops. We target our winter forage planting about 10 days to 2 weeks before our wheat planting date. Our sorghum work is looking at planting rates of 75,000 to 175,000 seeds/acre in 7.5, 15, and 30 inch rows to maximize the yield in our long day, higher rainfall northern climate zone (this isn't Texas). We also will be testing length of cut and processor gap at harvest time.

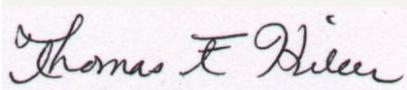
Where we got the herbicide on the sorghum immediately after planting it is a clean field with a good stand. I am still not happy with the uniformity of the stand. We are looking at other drills that uniformly meter the seed while accurately controlling the depth of planting. I have seen fields planted with a 15 inch row corn planter with sorghum units, which did an excellent job. The objective is to maximize sunlight interception as quick as possible with a uniform stand across the entire field. This maximizes sunlight interception and minimizes weed potential at the same time. I have not found the drill that can do it yet.



Preplant glyphosate in foreground controlled triticale and weeds that emerged when heavy rains leached the alleopathic compounds out.



Sincerely,



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