



ADVANCED AG SYSTEMS'S

Crop Soil News

<http://www.advancedagsys.com/>

July 2013

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

Fields Not Planted or Underwater?

Most of the areas encompassing this newsletter continue to have excessive rainfall. Some fields are still not planted; others have drowned. This was predicted earlier in the season due to the cool Pacific and warm Atlantic cycles coupled with volcanoes pouring ash into the Arctic Circle. This follow-up to the June letter is to give you a wider range of potential choices to fit the resources in the location of your farm.

*"A drought will scare a man to death, a flood will starve him"
(an old farmer saying)*

Corn: The farmer's choice is to still plant corn even though it will not mature. Why? It is a known entity to most farmers – they are less likely to make a mistake with it. It will also do much better if temperatures in your region (this letter covers a huge geographic area) are cooler than normal (sorghum species like warm weather). Based on work in Wisconsin, corn has two peaks of forage quality, one at silking and one at maturity. <http://wisccorn.blogspot.com/2012/07/harvesting-barren-and-poorly-pollinated.html> In many cases it will not make maturity so planting the longer season with **highest fiber digestibility** that will hit **silking at harvest** time would be the best bet. You then have two choices. First, to let it get frosted and hope you can get it dried enough for harvest before the sugars (where most of the energy is contained) get leached out by rain events. The risk is if you use the high fiber digestible BMR corn, the stalk could have standability issues if left too long after it is frosted. A possible better second choice is to follow the suggestions on harvesting wet, high sugar forages as outlined in the October 2012 newsletter <http://advancedagsys.com/october-2012-wet-forage-5/> This will have to go into bunks or bags that use newer (not worn and rounded) presses. A longer length of cut would reduce the number of cuts on the plant to reduce some of the potential leachate. The longer cut, low fiber BMR packs very well. A third option is to plant one of the BMR grazing corns that are harvested in 60 days. They can be planted with a corn planter but ideally they should be in 15 inch or narrower rows to optimize light interception (see sorghum discussion below). The grazing corns are also harvested at tassel/silk stage. Some farmers mow wide and then round bale the crop. Others mow wide and then chop it at the correct moisture. Some direct chop it. In any case, it NEEDS TO BE ENSILED THE DAY IT IS CUT. Leaving it overnight burns off the high sugars where most of the milk producing energy is contained.

BMR Sorghum

Last year I planted the 83 day BMR Sorghum in early July and was able to squeak a crop to silage maturity by the end of September (it needs lots of heat). This is possible south of Albany, NY. The key mistake is planting it too thick. We are suggesting 6 to 8 lbs. of seed/acre at 1 inch deep planted with a **modern drill**. This will reduce the potential for lodging while simultaneously intercepting the maximum amount of sunlight in the shortest period of time to maximize yield. It has worked well planting in 15 inch rows also. It can be planted in 30 inch rows with the correct adapters in your corn planter. The narrower in-row spacing of 30 inch rows can affect standability. We also learned last year that it can be harvested before it is mature providing you follow the suggestions in the October 2012 newsletter on wet forage. Only plant a BMR 6 type sorghum as it has milk producing ability the same as corn. The other BMR (12, 18) and non BMR are much lower in digestibility.

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BMR Sorghum-Sudan or BMR Sudan

These are crops that produce the same energy as corn but can be planted later, as they do not need to reach a certain maturity stage (later you plant the less yield). They work very well in round bale wrapping systems if they are wrapped the same day they are mowed. At this late date, most areas will only have one cut while further south from Albany NY, they could get two cuttings this season. If you take two cuttings, note the cutting height for the first cut is 5- 6 inches for most varieties. Paul Craig of Penn Extension found that the higher cutting height sped regrowth and produced 16% more yield in the season than a lower cut on first harvest.

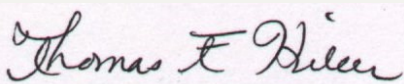
Fall Spring Oats: Planted at 5 bu/a of grain type oats, you could harvest 2 to 4 tons of dry matter by the end of September if planted in early August (for Albany, NY area). Because of the increasingly cool fall temperatures, the forage quality was so high we called it “**green grain**”! It is simple, but not foolproof to grow. Unless you take proper steps it can get screwed up. For more northern areas, planting the end of July or the first of August is possible. For the Albany NY area we target about the 5 – 10th of August; while further south, they plant later. The reason for the delay is to wait for the cool nights of August to reduce the aphid population. We planted oats once the end of July and by the end of August all the oats were dead as aphids brought in Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus. Cool nights with heavy dew seems to knock the aphids and reduce the potential for loss. Dr. Sorrels of Cornell indicated that the varieties Spurs, Rodeo, and Blaze are the most resistant BYDV if you are concerned this will be an issue.

Grain oats will go through its life cycle quicker and so be ready in September when you still have some heat to dry it for silage. If you are not going to be able to plant until later or have to harvest/graze later, then the slower forage oat type would be the better recommendation. Be liberal with the manure and immediately incorporate it to capture the ammonia nitrogen. Oat silage is 16- 17% crude protein if it has enough nitrogen and sulfur. For high producing dairy cows, mow as soon as the flag leaf is out. This forage will help to offset the poorer quality some were forced by weather to harvest this spring. If you are extremely short on forage, the traditional “boot” stage will give you higher yield of good forage. The reason for the later cut to still have high digestibility is because of the very cool night temperatures inhibit respiration of the most digestible parts, and they accumulate in the plant. Frost only hits the tops and the rest of the plant keeps growing. We often have green oats in early November or until the first snow. **NOTE!:** If you applied manure before planting, it is **NOT** recommended that you feed this to dry cows. Potassium levels will run 3% to over 5%. This is NOT for dry cows.

Heavy yielding fall oats are wet. Mow wide swath, and TEDD after an hour or so of drying. You are trying to dry something that can yield 2 – 3 times more tons of dry matter than a heavy first cutting alfalfa. Even with wide swath, because of the high yield, the shear mass will allow only the top to dry. As soon as the top has a light grey cast (pick up a surface plant and see if it is greener underneath) hit it with the tedder to get the lower layers spread and drying (use a slower forward speed or you will make non-drying tedder lumps). **It is critical that it be ensiled the same day you mow** because of the very high sugar levels. Leaving it overnight burns off the sugars and produces higher populations of Clostridia and higher levels of butyric acid. Same day haylage (read the above referenced October 2012 newsletter on wet forage) because of the very high sugar levels, will speed the process and produce an excellent fermented forage.

Fall Spring Oats plus Winter Triticale: Three bushel of oats planted with 80 pounds of triticale in the beginning of August will give an oat harvest the end of September. If you mow the oats at least 3.5 inches, the triticale will continue to grow into the fall. Fertilized the triticale as normal the next spring and you can have two very high quality forage crops in one planting. It can be followed by corn.

Sincerely,



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