



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."**

Last Chance Forage

With weather repeating the wet conditions of 2013, there are farms who still have not planted fields or have crops that have drowned. We have research in the ground looking at various choices but you need suggestions now.

For planting now, you have two choices, corn or sorghum species. At this point for north of the line of southern Pennsylvania, I would suggest the corn over the sorghum. The repeated bouts of cooler than normal weather (especially nights) are not conducive to sorghum species. El Nino is bringing warmth, but it may not be soon enough. My early planted BMR sorghum with warm weather was out of the ground in 5 days; a later one with low 50 degree nights took twice as long to emerge. Those south of this location will have sufficient heat for sorghum, even if it is a cool season as their "cool" is much warmer than ours.

In most areas corn planted this late will not make maturity so planting varieties with **highest fiber digestibility** that will hit **silking at harvest** time would be the best bet. 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> The highest fiber digestion is usually a bmr corn. One choice is a BMR grazing corn that is harvested in 60 days (at tassel time). It can be planted with a corn planter but ideally they should be in 15 inch or drilled rows to optimize light interception in your shortened season. You can let any of these corns 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 that the stalk could have standability issues if left to long after it is frosted. A second more experimental choice is to harvest wet, high sugar forages with a homolactic bacteria added. This would go into bunks or bags that use newer (not worn and rounded) presses. A longer length of cut (30 mm? we are testing it this fall) could reduce the number of cuts on the plant to reduce the potential leachate and preserve the high sugar energy. The longer cut, low fiber BMR packs very well. In 2013 I planted a BMR grazing corn on July 10 and was able to harvest over 13 tons/acre of silage in early September.



Late planted crops such as BMR grazing corn or BMR sorghum species, do best in narrow rows to maximize sunlight interception sooner.

For areas south of the Mason Dixon line, BMR sorghums, especially the BMR brachytic dwarfs which stand to maturity, will be able to reach silage maturity by the end of September (it needs lots of heat). Only plant a BMR 6 sorghum as this type has milk producing ability similar to corn. For the farms with round bale silage systems, the BMR sorghum-Sudan's, BMR Sudan grasses, and BMR pearl millet can 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. Planting at higher populations will produce thinner stems for wrapping and keep most weeds from being an issue.

Spring Oats in Late Summer: For those planting early August, fall planted oats for forage has the biggest potential and most practical. Planted at 3 – 5 bu/a of grain type oats, you could

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harvest 2 to 4 tons of dry matter by the end of September if planted in early August (for Albany, NY area). The normally cool night temperatures of September conserves the sugars and produces forage of high fiber digestibility.

There are critical steps for success. Planting the end of July or the first of August has the risk that aphids bring in Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus which can kill the plant. Dr. Shields at Cornell reports, "Since Barley Yellow Dwarf virus is circulative, a neonic seed treatment will kill many aphids before they can transmit the virus.....most of your problems would be in the disease area like rust." Rust is very prevalent this year and there are a lot of spores to infect new oat plantings. Seed supply of resistant varieties is very slim to none. It is highly suggested that your seed dealer treats any VNS (bin run clean oat grain) with both a fungicide and an insecticide before planting for forage. This will alleviate a lot of potential disasters in an already messy year. If you choose to ignore this advice and plant non treated seed, we suggest delaying 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 were dead from disease.



Bin run oats with a fungicide/ insecticide seed treatment can give tremendous forage yields in the fall.

Grain oats will be ready in late 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. **NOTE!:** If you applied manure before planting, it is **NOT** recommended that you feed this to dry cows as potassium levels will run over 5%. For high producing dairy cows, mow as soon as the flag leaf is out (will also reduce lodging issues). This forage will help to offset the poorer quality haylage many are dealing with this year. 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. We often have green oats until the first snow.

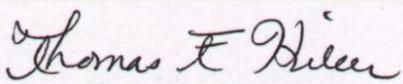
Heavy yielding fall oats are wet. **Mow wide swath, and TEDD** after two hours of drying. You are trying to dry something that can yield 2 – 3 times more tons of dry matter than a heavy first cutting alfalfa. As soon as the top has a light grey cast (pick up a surface plant and see if it is greener underneath) tedd 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. The only exception appears to be nights that get down into the 30's could reduce respiration. Use a homolactic bacteria that can handle a high sugar wetter forage to 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** (photo at right), the triticale will continue to grow into the fall. It is **critical that the triticale be planted at 1.25 inches deep to prevent heaving**. 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.



Fall oats with alfalfa or clover seeding? The simple answer is **DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS –IT WILL FAIL!** I planted forage oats with even the shade tolerant red clover and the oats completely smothered the red clover. It will be worse with alfalfa.

Sincerely,



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