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The Practical COVER CROPPER

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Brian Fager farms near Atlantic, IA and has been using cereal rye as a cover crop since 2016. He has observed improved infiltration and reduced soil erosion since he started employing cover crops and no-till practices.

Waiting for the right termination

temperature: Brian says, "It's better to wait to kill the cereal rye cover crop on a warm, sunny day with soil temperatures above 50 degrees F than to try to kill it well ahead of planting and end up getting only partial termination."

For farmers who don't want to let a cereal rye cover get too big before planting, Brian recommends either terminating the cover at least 7-10 days ahead of planting to avoid planting into "muck" or chasing the planter with a sprayer.



Moisture not a concern: Brian has observed that an overwintered cover won't steal moisture from cash crops. He notes, "The cover gets evapotranspiration going earlier in the spring. As long as we have the sprayer coming fairly soon after planting, we're not seeing any moisture-robbing."

Employing precision planting: "One of the reasons we can make cover crops work is precision planting," Brian explains. His planter has sharp, trailing arm, floating-style row cleaners to cut through the cover.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Seeding cover crops in fall of 2021? Enroll in cost share!



Ready to invest in cover crops on your farm? **You could earn \$1,600 or more to help offset the cost– [fill out the application now to see if you're eligible.](#)**

[Fill out the application now](#)

"Catching Up" with you this summer



This summer we will host a series of small, energizing, in-person gatherings on farms across Iowa.

We're starting the planning, and the line-up will expand on a rolling basis throughout the summer as more pop-up, local events are organized. [Fill out this form](#) to let us know your interests and availability.

IN THE FIELD

Blog: To terminate or not to terminate?



In [this blog](#), Iowa State's **Bob Hartzler** outlines how to avoid cover crop termination failures.

He writes, "It is generally recommended to avoid applications when nighttime temperatures fall below 40 F, and we prefer temperatures at application to be at least in the mid-50s with clear skies."

[Read the blog](#) for additional steps on reducing the risk of termination failures.

Research report: Terminating cereal rye after seeding soybeans (Or not!)



Jon Bakehouse and **Sam Bennett** conducted research to better understand how long growth of a cereal rye cover crop in soybeans can be prolonged without sacrificing yield and profitability.

After two years of **on-farm research**, they found that it is possible to delay rye termination up to 27 days after planting without sacrificing soybean yield, but that careful management under drought conditions is critical in order to avoid soybean yield loss.

Blog: Seedcorn maggots get an early start



Iowa State entomologists report that the first generation of adult seedcorn maggot has likely emerged throughout most of Iowa.

The blog authors write, "Farmers with persistent seedcorn maggot infestations should consider a later planting date, shallower planting, higher seeding rates, and earlier termination of cover crops."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Field Day: Grazing Rye and Combine Attachment to Spread Seed

Hosted by: Jack Smith & Iowa Beef Center

April 28 | 7:30 – 9 a.m. CT | Epworth, IA

Field Day: Cover Crops as Forage

Hosted by: Bill Swanson & Iowa Beef Center

May 3 | 7:30 – 9 a.m. CT | Ottumwa, IA

Field Day: Incorporating Annual Forages into the Cattle Feeding System

Hosted by: Amana Farms & Iowa Beef Center

May 4 | 7:30 – 9 a.m. CT | Amana, IA

Webinar: Topic TBA

Hosted by: Mark Licht & Iowa Learning Farms

May 5 | 12 p.m. CT | Online

Want to host a virtual cover crop happy hour? We'll help you with the tech, and how to virtually invite your neighbors to the discussion. Contact Sarah if interested sarah@practicalfarmers.org

Are you planning or hosting a cover crop event—virtual or in person? Send the details to rebecca@practicalfarmers.org, and we'll include it in our next newsletter.

COVER CROP POLL

Send us your cover crop poll ideas! We want to know what YOU want to know. Reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

When will you terminate cereal rye relative to soybean planting date?

More than one week before planting

Select

1-7 days before planting

Select

The day of planting

Select

1-7 days after planting

Select

More than one week after planting

Select

N/A

Select

Previous poll results:

What will you plant first this year?

- **Corn - 81.8%**
- Soybeans - **18.2%**

CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

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