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Small Grains News & Updates

Greetings,

I've heard from several of you in southern and central Iowa that you're planting oats, wheat and barley this week. I know you northerners are getting antsy, but don't fret, it'll soon be time for you to plant too. I've tried to make our resources on timely planting and agronomy topics easy to find by listing them below. Don't hesitate to reach out by phone or email if you have further questions.

If you snap any pictures while you're out working with small grains this spring and summer - send them my way!

Good Luck Planting,

Alisha

NEW! Add Your Business to the Small Grains Directory

The PFI small grains and cover crop directories include not only sources for supplies and services (seed and custom planting) but also market opportunities for small grains. Right now the directories are focused on Iowa, but if I get enough interest I will consider compiling broader directories.

You can go online to view the current [2017 small grains directory](#) and [2017 cover crop directory](#) -- if you'd like your name to be added or your information has changed from what is listed here, please respond to me (alisha@practicalfarmers.org) with an email that includes:

1. Service(s) you provide (seed cleaning, seed buying, grain buying, seed sales, cover crop planting/high clearance seeding/aerial seeding or **NEW! custom swathing**)
2. Small grains varieties you buy if you are listing as a seed or grain buyer (barley, oats, rye, triticale or wheat)
3. Business name
4. City and State
5. Phone number

Handling Over-Wintering Cover Crops Preceding Spring Small Grains

How do you plant oats or barley on a field where you established winter rye last fall as a cover crop? In general, it's best to avoid this situation by leaving fields bare that will be planted to spring small grains. While this can seem like a step backwards to conservation-minded farmers who like to keep things green year-round, it is the best, most reliable way to establish a spring small grain early and guarantee that it won't be contaminated with a winter grain at harvest time.

But, hindsight is always 20/20, right? For those of you who are staring down this situation right now, here are some things to consider:

1. **Can you shift your fields around?** If you have a corn or soybean field that didn't get a cover crop put on it last year that you could swap, you could use the winter rye as a cover crop before soybeans and put the small grain on that open field without a cover crop.
2. **Consider taking the winter grain to harvest instead of planting a spring one.** Whether or not this will work for you depends on your end market for the grain and whether you can easily substitute one small grain for another. It also depends on the quality of the stand of winter grain. If you're not sure whether you have a "keeper stand" of winter grains check out this [replant decisions blog](#) I wrote to help you estimate your yield potential.
3. **If you have to terminate, do it as soon as possible, preferably with tillage (this year).** Because we've had such a sluggish, cold spring many winter small grains aren't actively growing yet -- which means they can't be terminated with herbicide. If you get out to till now, the plant will still be small and dormant, thus easy to till up. This will allow you to get the spring small grain in the field sooner and avoid any herbicide damage. Oats are notoriously fickle when it comes to herbicides. If you have to rely on chemical termination, you must read the label carefully for application restrictions on small grains. Getting complete termination is crucial (depending on your market) to ensure that you have a clean grain harvest of just one type of small grain and not a mixture of spring and winter grains.

We Moved!

We found a new home to accommodate our growing staff and programs. The Practical Farmers of Iowa office is now located at:

1615 Golden Aspen Dr, Suite 101
Ames, IA 50010

If you're in town stop on by and check out the new space!

EVENTS

No call in May -- We'll resume calls on June 1

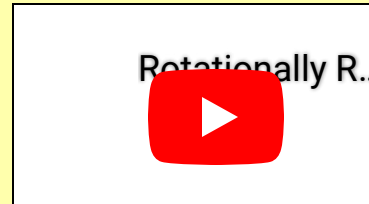
[Small Grains Shared Learning Call](#)

June 1 Noon - 1 p.m. | Designing the Right Summer Cover Crop Mix for You
Dial 641-715-3620 and enter passcode 357330# when prompted.

Grain Drill Calibration

Calibrating your grain drill is a key piece of controlling costs for a profitable small grain year. Here are some resources about how to calibrate your grain drill for small grains:

1. The [drill calibration and plant population episode](#) of our rotationally raised video series.



Seed Bed Preparation

Small grains are big babies when it comes to coping with uneven planting depths. Make sure you're set up for success before you even take the drill out into the field by doing appropriate field prep.

1. [Episode 5 of our rotationally raised video series](#) focuses on seed bed preparation and achieving target population and stand for small grains.

Be Ready to Fertilize

The optimal time to apply fertilizer to small grains to avoid lodging is before planting or shortly after. Make sure you're ready to apply fertilizer at the right time.

1. The [growth stages fertilizers and fungicides](#) episode of our rotationally raised video series.
2. The blog from [March 2017's shared learning call](#) with agronomists on optimal fertilizer strategies.
3. The blog from [June 2017's shared learning call](#) on Mark Ditlevson's fertilizer timing and rates.

STAY CONNECTED



Looking for more? Contact us today!

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