

Cover Crops

Overview

Harvesting corn for silage leaves very little plant residue on the ground to help control water runoff and soil erosion. A cover crop interseeded before, or planted immediately after, silage harvest helps protect soil from wind and heavy rains. An established cover crop also helps improve soil structure and uptake of nutrients.

What you should know

- Cover crops commonly used on corn silage ground include rye, ryegrass, red clover, hairy vetch, sweet clover and barley. Radish seed is growing in popularity for its ability to break up compacted soil.
- Determine priorities for your fields and focus on the top two or three to address with cover crops, such as soil erosion, runoff or compaction.
- Consider what will be planted in the field next year. Forage grasses are recommended when soybeans will be planted. A legume or combination crop is recommended when grain corn or corn silage hybrids will be planted.

Action steps

1. **Sow early:** Seed your cover crop early enough to establish a thick growth. Most cover crops should be in the ground by mid-to-late September, just after corn silage is harvested.
2. **Interseed:** Interseeding a cover crop into corn allows it to establish before silage harvest. Most interseeding takes place at cultivation when corn is 6–24 inches tall. Another option is seeding 10–14 days prior to silage harvest by aerial application or high-clearance spreader.
3. **Terminate cereal grain cover crops late:** Spring regrowth on overwintering cereal grain should be terminated as late as possible to obtain the full benefit of the cover crop. Glyphosate and sethoxydim herbicides are recommended for killing the spring regrowth.



Seed cover crops early to establish thick growth before fall frost.



30-Second Summary

- Fields harvested for corn silage have little residue remaining on the ground.
- Cover crops interseeded in corn, or planted immediately after harvest, can reduce soil erosion and provide other benefits to improve the soil.
- Terminate spring regrowth on overwintering cereal grain as late as possible for the most benefit.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



www.nutechseed.com
1-888-647-3478