



# Corn after winter forages

## Overview

Utilizing winter cover crops for hay and silage production allows you to realize soil conservation benefits while increasing dry matter production per acre. Proper cover crop management in the spring can ensure a successful subsequent corn crop.

## What you should know

- This type of production is common where longer growing seasons allow delayed planting. Choosing the right locations and hybrids can help you make the most out of double-crop corn after winter forages.
- Balance the shortened growing season with the opportunity to harvest dry matter in early spring. Areas farther north and higher in elevation need earlier-maturing corn hybrids, which might result in decreased yield potential. In a dry spring, moisture may be limited for the corn crop, especially in shallow or coarsely textured soils.
- In a double-crop system, you can apply spring manure on an actively growing hay crop, which provides nourishment for the following corn crop.

## Action steps

1. **Determine forage harvest time:** Earlier harvesting may be necessary to meet spring planting goals. Avoid harvesting in wet conditions to prevent soil compaction.
2. **Apply burndown herbicide:** This has soil conservation benefits and reduces the time between forage harvest and corn planting. Allow forage to regrow to 6 to 8 inches before spraying.
3. **Select the right hybrid:** Depending on your location, it may be necessary to pick a shorter-maturity hybrid.
4. **Ensure proper planter setup:** Make sure row openers and closing wheels are functioning properly for good seed-to-soil contact.
5. **Monitor manure application:** Manure can be applied after spring harvest as long as it does not interfere with corn planting. Be sure to account for nutrient credits in the previous forage crop and manure applications.



*Planting winter forages before corn is an excellent option, especially in areas with delayed planting. Proper forage management ensures a successful corn crop.*



## 30-Second Summary

- Planting winter cover crops for hay and silage production before corn can benefit your soil and your bottom line.
- Carefully time forage harvest and burn-down to maximize subsequent corn production.
- Depending on your location, look for faster-maturing hybrids.
- Factor spring manure applications for forages into your nutrient management plans.

For more information, contact:



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