Cereal Rye Cover Crop Effect on Corn Yield

Alan Sundermeier, Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Educator
Jim Hoorman, Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Educator

Objective

To evaluate effect of cereal rye cover crop on corn yield.

Background

Cooperator: O.A.R.D.C. NW Branch
County: Wood
Nearest Town: Hoytville
Drainage: Systematic tiled
Soil type: Hoytville, clay
Tillage: no-till
Previous Crop: Corn
Variety: Pioneer PO518 XR
Fertilizer: 150 lb/ac nitrogen, sidedress
Planting Date: April 21, 2010
Planting Rate: 30,000 seeds/ac
Row Width: 30 in.
Herbicides: Lexar, Princep, 2,4-D
Harvest Date: September 15, 2010

Methods

The entries were replicated four times in a randomized complete block design. Plot size- 10 x 80 feet each entry. Harvest data was collected from the center 2 rows. On October 22, 2009, cereal rye cover crop was drilled into soybean residue at a rate of 1.5 bu/acre. On April 14, 2010 these cover crop plots were killed with Glyphosate, 2,4-D ester spray. Rye stand was adequate to cover the soil. Plots were planted no-till. This was the third year of continuous corn.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corn Yield (bu/A) Response to Cereal Rye Cover Crop</th>
<th>Yield (bu/A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal Rye</td>
<td>98.5 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No cover crop</td>
<td>87.6 b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSD (0.10) 8.2
Summary

Using a cereal rye cover crop had a significant corn yield increase when compared to no cover crop. This experiment is the third year in continuous no-till corn. A cereal rye cover crop has improved the ability of corn production in a high residue situation. Due to dry conditions in July and August, the rye may have preserved soil moisture and resulted in an increase in corn production. Yields were below normal in surrounding production fields due to dry soils. Harvest populations were similar in the comparison. Caution should be used to scout for potential corn pests when planting corn into a cereal rye cover crop.

Per acre economics

Value of corn yield increase:

\[ 10.9 \text{ bu} \times \$5.00 / \text{bu} \ (\text{corn price}) = \$54.50 \]

Cost of cereal rye cover crop:

\[ 1.5 \text{ bu} \times \$12.00 / \text{bu} \ (\text{seed cost}) = \$18.00 \]

Net return from cover crop = $36.50

For more information, contact:
Alan Sundermeier
OSU Extension, Wood County
639 S. Dunbridge Rd, Suite 1
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
sundermeier.5@osu.edu