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## Crownvetch fits into no-till program

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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. - Using crownvetch as a cover crop for no-tillage corn can help solve the age-old problems of soil erosion and weeds, a plant scientist at The Pennsylvania State University declared recently.

Dr. Nathan L. Hartwig indicated experiments at Penn State and elsewhere found that crownvetch reduces surface water runoff and improves water storage in the soil. And he reminded farmers that every farm in Pennsylvania must have a soil conservation plan this year to prevent the polluting of streams with silt, plant nutrients, and pesticides carried in surface water runoff.

"Crownvetch in no-tillage cornfields could provide the dollar's worth of prevention needed for a water runoff problem that now is treated with millions of dollars in cures," Hartwig affirmed.

He claimed a cover crop of crownvetch also improves the nitrogen fertility of soil, since crownvetch "fixes" nitrogen from the air when inoculated with the right bacteria. And he said research shows that 100 bushels per acre corn yields are possible for no-tillage

corn planted into a three to five year old stand of crownvetch, without being given any additional nitrogen.

By using herbicides in the spring, growth of crownvetch is slowed down sufficiently to allow the emerging corn plants to become established. During the Summer, the crownvetch forms a cover to keep out weeds. By Fall this legume has formed a dense cover for Winter and a living mulch for next year's corn crop.

The Penn State weed scientist said established crownvetch will not be wiped out by any of the presently recommended herbicides used with no-tillage corn. Once the crownvetch is growing actively in late May, it takes only 1-10 pound per acre of active dicamba or 2,4-D to suppress crownvetch enough to release the corn.

"Crownvetch that has been established for two years or more will tolerate atrazine, simazine (Princep), cyanazine (Bladex), alachlor (Lasso), or penoxalin (Prowl) in amounts suggested on the label for specific soil types when treating annual weeds

or quackgrass in no-tillage corn," Hartwig stated.

He believes simazine is "too hot" to use on one-year-old crownvetch. However, atrazine can be used at a rate not to exceed 1 pound per acre. If weeds such as fall panicum, witchgrass, or crabgrass are problems, use a mixture of atrazine and cyanazine (Gladex) at the lowest rate recommended on the label for a particular soil type. Another method, he said, is to use Prowl or Bladex plus Prowl at recommended rates for the soil type.

"Always be ready to come back with one-tenth pound per acre of 2,4-D or dicamba if the crownvetch appears to be getting ahead of the corn," he advised.

And he said the best control for quackgrass in crownvetch seed fields is two pounds of atrazine per acre in early spring - March or April - before planting corn. As long as the crownvetch is not growing, it will not be injured by this treatment, Hartwig noted.

If there is a lot of green quackgrass or weed growth at corn planting time, he suggests applying a pint of paraquat per acre with a wetting agent in the mixture

with atrazine and simazine. Hartwig cautioned farmers to follow carefully the directions on product labels.

## Part-time farming studied

Approximately 25 per cent of the farms in Pennsylvania with sales over \$2500 are operated by part-time farmers, farmers who have income from off-the-farm sources. Successful operations are usually dependent on the families, because it takes similar values and goals to make them work.

Penn State's popular course on "Farm Management for Part-Time Farmers" explores the pros and cons of this arrangement for individual farm families. Land, labor, management, capital, and market requirements and the advantages of 18 livestock and 18 crop enterprises are discussed. Lessons on record keeping, tax considerations, budgeting, and insurance needs are geared to the part-time farm business.

If you would like a copy of this course, either as a reference or to enroll as a correspondence course student, write to "Part-time farmers," Box 5000, University Park, Pa. 16802. Make your check for \$5.50 payable to Penn State.

## Barn meeting scheduled

The Lancaster County Holstein Association is sponsoring a barn meeting at the home of Jay E. Landis, Lancaster R6, on Friday, February 25. Farm visitation will begin at 1:00 p.m., with the meeting getting underway at 1:30 p.m.

Clarence Stauffer, HFAA program director, will discuss the grade identification program. Refreshments will be served.

Traveling south from Millersville on the Miller-ville Road, the Landis farm is located on Short Lane which is the first road to the

right after passing Circle M Ranch.

Traveling north from New Danville on the Millersville Road, the farm is located to the left on Short Lane.

Barn Meeting chairman is Nelson Wenger with committee members J. Robert Kendig and Roger Mills. For further information contact any committee member.



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