

Forest Landowners

WARREN (Warren Co.) - The Fourth Annual Forest Landowners Conference is scheduled Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Penn State Erie, The Behrend College in Erie.

This all-day program lasts from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. cost is \$13 and preregistration is required by Jan. 12.

The conference is targeted toward private forest landowners interested in taking care of their woodlands. Cooperatively sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension, the Bureau of Forestry, the North West Pennsylvania Woodland Association (NWPWA) and Penn State Erie, the day is open to anyone with an interest in natural resources and their stewardship.

This year's session brings

experts from West Virginia and across Pennsylvania to share useful information on topics such as forest insect and disease pests, planting and protection trees, timber taxation, managing for and selling timber, and putting trees to work at home.

The highlight will be an afternoon session presented by Gary San Julian, Penn State professor of wildlife resources, titled "Bucks and Doe; The Currency of Change." This session will focus on the issues forest managers and landowners face when populations of white-tailed deers are too high for the land to support.

Contact Warren County Cooperative Extension, 609 Rouse Ave., Suite 200; Youngsville, PA 16371, (814) 563-3988, or at warrenext@psu.edu for a program brochure and registration form.

Continuous Soybeans? With Cover Crop, Maybe

LANDISVILLE (Lancaster Co.) - The 1999 drought had surprisingly little effect on the top soybean yields in a "cover crop in continuous soybean" study, according to the principal investigator, John Yocum. The study was supported by a checkoff grant from the Pennsylvania Soybean Promotion Board.

Although results in the project were somewhat more variable than would be expected in years with normal rainfall and there was not as much difference between treatments, the study crops did reasonably well, Yocum added.

The top yielding plot came in at 58 bushels an acre. In that plot, rye

was seeded in beans after beans, the rye was Roundup-killed, and soybeans were seeded with a no-till corn planter.

The plot with no cover crop — beans after beans — yielded 42 bushels. Still not bad, Yocum said. Yocum is assigned to Penn State's Southeast Ag Research and Extension Center in Landisville.

"This is a long-term project primarily to see if we can improve soil health — increasing organic levels and controlling winter erosion — by planting these particular cover crops.

"We recently finished a three-year study just last year, planting wheat in standing beans, and it

would appear, if one of the small grains is seeded in, you can get a good enough crop to act as a good cover crop to hold the soil over winter and create a good mulch."

The current study is a much longer range project and Yocum said he would seek funding for another year.

"The effect on soil erosion has promise," he said. "The disadvantage is you have to drive through standing beans and some farmers just don't like to do that."

An alternative would be to seed by plane or helicopter. In that case, expense could be a limiting factor.

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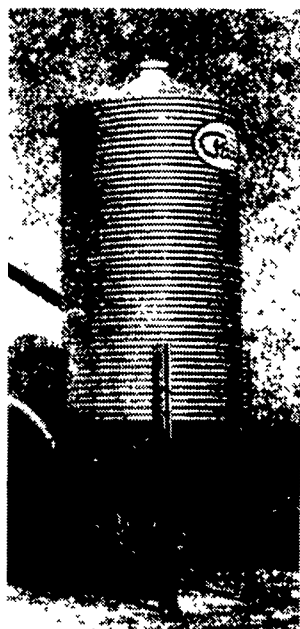
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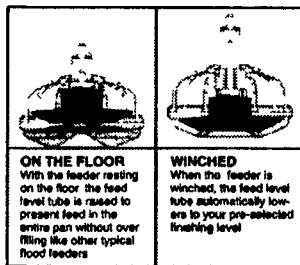
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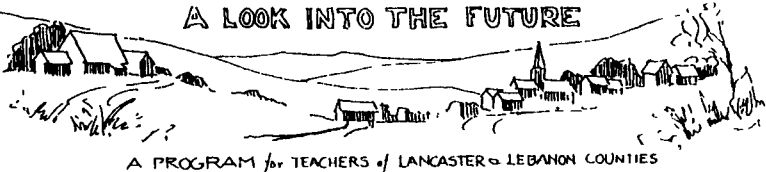


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Although research has shown that rotating crops produces higher yields, many farmers grow continuous corn for a variety of reasons which can be economic, for the control of certain weed species or farm field selection.

Farmers in Pennsylvania have been growing continuous corn for years but there has been little research on the effect of growing continuous soybeans and, more and more farmers are asking questions.

Multiple years of soybeans has several problems that are not a problem with multiple years of corn, Yocum explained.

Soybeans produce less and a more fragile residue than corn. They also produce a loose soil. These attributes can cause more potential soil erosion, reduction of soil organic matter and soil compaction than would be the case with continuous corn.

"With the increased pressure on the farming community to reduce soil erosion, nutrient runoff and leaching, growing continuous soybean probably would not meet conservation plans," Yocum said.

"Planting a cover crop for the months soybeans are not growing should overcome the negatives of continuous soybean production. But there is no research to indicate the effects of these cover crops upon continuous soybean production," Yocum said.

In answer to the question being asked by many Pennsylvania farmers whether soybeans can be grown multiple years in the same field, this study should help determine whether cover crops can be successfully seeded into standing soybeans, which cover crops are superior, and whether this cover will improve soil structure and, over time, the production of continuous soybeans.