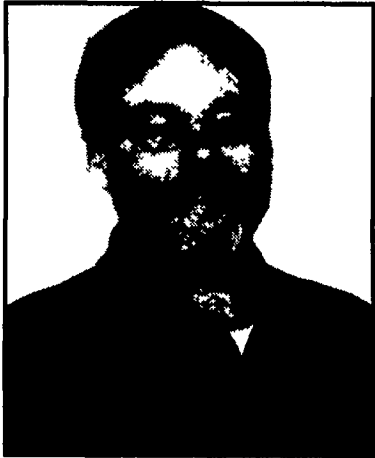


Penn State Cooperative Extension Capitol Region Dairy Team

**INTERSEEDING
TRITICALE
AND ALFALFA**
Paul H. Craig
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— Forage Crop Production
Dauphin County



Paul H. Craig

In 2001 I had an opportunity to visit the University of Maryland's Clarksville Facility. One of the most interesting trials I observed was looking at an interseeding of triticale into an existing alfalfa stand following the last fall harvest to increase first cutting yields. This work began in the fall of 1996 and has shown some very impressive results.

With extremely short forage production in 2002, this practice may be very handy next spring following a winter/spring of feeding stored feeds. In the fall of 2001 I convinced a Dauphin County dairyman, Tom Wil-

liams, to try overseeding some of his stands of alfalfa and he was very pleased with the results this spring.

The initial response from producers about overseeding triticale

is that older, thinner stands would be best suited for the practice. Work at Maryland has shown, however, that there is an advantage to this practice on even younger stands of alfalfa, 1 to 3 years, without any detrimental effects to the alfalfa. Here's how it works, based on Maryland research.

Following last harvest, triticale is sown at 50 to 60 pounds per acre into newer stands of alfalfa (1 to 3 years old) and 80 pounds/acre into older, thinner stands. Then in the spring, additional nitrogen is topdressed to get optimum production of the triticale. On newer stands, highest production has resulted from the addition of 50 pounds of nitrogen.

On older alfalfa stands, with higher triticale seeding rates, optimum yields were achieved with

the addition of 120 pounds of nitrogen. In one trial, yields of first-cut alfalfa, without triticale but with 80 pounds of nitrogen was 1.93 tons/acre, with triticale and 80 pounds of nitrogen yields were 2.79 tons/acre of forage and 80 pounds of triticale and 120 pounds of nitrogen yielded 3.22 tons/acre. Forage analysis of the triticale/alfalfa silage cut at the late boot stage, in the 2000 crop, was 24.1 percent CP, 33.1 percent ADF, and 42.9 percent NDF.

Maryland faculty think the addition of nitrogen is the secret to success of the alfalfa stand persistence. They believe that although alfalfa can "fix" nitrogen, there does not appear to be sufficient nitrogen for the companion crop. Other benefits include an improvement in the first-cut harvest efficiency and cleanliness without any lodging. The triticale

supports the alfalfa and keeps it standing. This upright position results in less leaf shading and leaf loss. The upright position also results in better air circulation within the stand that keeps the lower part of the plant and the soil surface drier. The triticale also offers good winter annual weed competition in older stands.

Why triticale and not rye? Triticale is 2 to 3 weeks later in reaching maturity than rye and does not reach fully headed as quickly as rye, thus providing a wider harvest window more closely related to the optimum time to make first cutting of alfalfa. Triticale is taller than wheat or barley and thus has a higher yield potential. And the optimum harvest stage for wheat and barley is later than the desired time for alfalfa.

Administration Announces Award Deadline

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — On behalf of Gov. Mark Schweiker, Agriculture Secretary Sam Hayes announced that the deadline to apply for this year's Agri-Business Achievement Award is Nov. 15.

"Agri-Business Achievement Awards are presented to Pennsylvania agriculture, food and wood-products companies that have made a special contribution toward the development and expansion of Pennsylvania agricul-

ture, as well as a positive commitment to their local community," Hayes said.

All companies competing for this award must meet Department of Agriculture standards and qualifications. The Agri-Business Achievement Award will be presented to a Pennsylvania company in each of the following three categories: 1) companies with gross annual sales of less than \$16 million, 2) companies with gross annual sales from

\$16 million to \$50 million, and 3) companies with gross annual sales of more than \$50 million.

Winners will be announced at the annual Agro 2003 International Celebration Dinner Jan. 10, 2003, in Harrisburg.

For additional information or to receive an application, contact the PA Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Market Development at (717) 787-3181 or visit the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: "agriculture."

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