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Factors for Cover Crops on Prevented Planted Acres

Millions of acres in North Dakota could not be planted this year because of wet conditions. This has many producers considering cover crops on prevented planted acres. North Dakota State University Extension Service agents and specialists have recommendations for producers that are considering cover crops on prevented planted acres.

- Some crops have rotation restrictions for insurability primarily due to disease issues. Don't plant a cover crop, either alone or as a part of a cocktail mix, this summer that will preclude you from insuring your intended crop in 2012. A cover crop is considered the same as a crop planted for harvest as it pertains to rotation restrictions.
- Producers should contact their county Extension Service or Farm Service Agency (FSA) office for cover crop recommendations.
- Don't wait too long to plant a cover crop. Most crops should be planted no later than Aug. 5 through Aug. 10 in order to provide adequate time for the crop to develop to protect the soil.
- Winter wheat for harvest in 2012 is a good choice for planting on prevented planted acres. However, delay the winter wheat planting until the optimum planting window, which is early to mid-September and be sure the fields are free of grassy weeds for two weeks prior to planting. Winter wheat might be considered on fields with previous years of prevented planting because winter wheat may reduce the risk of having another year of prevented planting if next spring is again wet.
- Know the source of the cover crop seed and adhere to plant variety protection (PVP) laws. Generally, it is a violation of the PVP agreement to plant the saved seeds of any crops with proprietary traits, even if it is just going to be a cover crop. For example, bin-run Round-up Ready seed of any crop cannot be planted as a cover crop.
- Haying or grazing of a cover crop is permitted after Nov. 1. Haying and grazing earlier than that date will result in loss of 65 percent of the prevented planted payment on the crop will become part of the actual production history (APH). This means the 2011 yield will be 60 percent of the producer's APH. The combination of these factors is a large economic disincentive to early haying or grazing.
- Keep in contact with your insurance agent. Let the agent know what your plans are for a cover crop on prevented planted acres and get assurances from the company that your insurance indemnity won't be compromised by what you intend to plant and how you plan to use it. It also is recommended that producers check with the FSA to make sure cover crop plans comply with their policy on use of prevented planting acres. For example, FSA regulations only recognize corn as a cover crop if solid seeded.
- Keep written records of all correspondence with your insurance agent. It also can be beneficial to take photos of the cover crops as documentation because some fields will be checked for compliance with FSA cover crop rules.

Soybean Aphid

Weather has not been favorable for soybean aphid population growth with the frequent severe thunderstorms and high winds, which can wash aphids off plants and drown them. Populations continue to be below the economic threshold level of 250 aphids per plant. Continue to be vigilant scouting through R5 (early seed). There are some “insurance” spraying at the second application of glyphosate, where producers are tank-mixing an insecticide, even though soybean aphid numbers are not at the threshold. NDSU Extension Entomology does not recommend this practice, nor do we recommend any insecticide application when the economic threshold has not been reached. Beside the incompatibilities or phytotoxicity issue with tank-mixing insecticides and herbicides, the optimal application is different for herbicides. For example, glyphosate herbicide spraying is conducted with low-pressure, lower gallons of water per acreage (gpa), and large droplet-size nozzles to reduce spray drift. In contrast, insecticides are normally sprayed using high pressure (40 psi), higher gallons of water per acre (18-20 gpa by ground, 3-5 gpa by air), and small droplet-size nozzles to improve coverage and penetrate foliage.

GROWING DEGREE DAYS May 1 st planting date to July 27, 2011				
Location:	Fargo	Galesburg	Leonard	Prosper
Corn GDD	1389	1251	1347	1335
Depart from Normal	33	-2	29	12
Depart from 2010	-40	-34	-52	8

GROWING DEGREE DAYS May 22 nd planting date until July 27, 2011				
Location:	Fargo	Galesburg	Leonard	Prosper
Corn GDD	1202	1095	1174	1165
Depart from Normal	42	39	54	50
Depart from 2010	-64	-46	-76	-12

Compiled by Tiffany Stoppler, Extension Intern



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