

How Did The Cover Crops Do?

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CARBONDALE, ILL.

With the good weather in April, virtually all the cover crops were killed and planted. So how did they do?

First, let's look at the crimson clover trials in three locations. This year, only two varieties were used: Dixie,

which is an older variety, and the newcomer, AU Robin.

Both varieties survived the winter in excellent condition with 90-plus percent stands at two locations that were well drained. At another location on a flat, wet soil type, the stand was poor for Dixie, 10 percent, and a less than 40 percent stand of AU Robin.

At the Macomb, Illinois, location, Dixie had a 72.5 percent stand, and AU Robin was 42.5 percent. This is a location in west central Illinois, with temperatures at minus 10 degrees, so crimson clover now seems to have good winter hardiness. At the site near Carbondale, Dixie produced 116 pounds per acre N, and AU Robin

was 123 pounds per acre with no significant difference between them.

Looking at the vetch trials at the Macomb location, the varieties were above 70 percent stands (Saddle Butte, Pennington, Kaup, Albert Lea, Cisco early cover) while Groff vetch was 85 percent. The Lana wooly pod vetch and common vetch did poorly at 15 percent stands.

In southern Illinois, the same vetch varieties were over 85 percent stands, with the wooly pod and common vetch at less than 10 percent stands. Nitrogen levels ranged from 51 to 134 pounds per acre. The Pennington, Saddle Butte, Groff and Cisco varieties all produced over 120 pounds per acre.

The annual ryegrass rooting trial showed that root penetration was significant even in a very wet environment. Most varieties rooted 23 to 30 inches deep, and a new experimental variety rooted more than 34 inches deep in a claypan soil type near Fairfield, Illinois.

So even with subzero temperatures and above normal rainfall, these cover crops performed very well. Δ

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