

New Ethanol Fact Sheets, Cover Crop Results

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Things have been somewhat depressing lately. Rain, rain and more rain, slow planting progress and continued ethanol-bashing by the media and EPA. Plus, we have the new cap and trade carbon legislation that is not giving agriculture any credit

for sequestering carbon, and is penalizing us for creating greenhouse gases from nitrogen application and contributing to air pollution from equipment dust.

But on the bright side, we just finished the University of Illinois fact sheets on ethanol. You can find them at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/ethanol>. These fact sheets are also provided in PDF so that you can print them and share with people – they are a good educational tool. The information will also be incorporated into many of our meetings and consumer education programs this year.

In the process of completing our legume cover crop trials on the Terry Taylor farm in Geff, Illi-

nois, we learned that there is a “big” difference in hairy vetch varieties. Of the six different varieties, VF-1 started blooming in mid-April, while Pennington VP-08 was just starting to bloom on May 12.

The planting date has also been a critical factor. The 16 varieties were planted in replicated plots on September 10 and again on October 2. All the vetch varieties overwintered with little winter damage when planted on September 10; the two Crimson clovers, Mihi and Oddessey Persian clovers, and Austrian winter pea survived the winter and had excellent growth. Even the subterranean clover had a 35 percent stand. These results are surprising given the minus-7-degree winter temperatures.

Only three hairy vetch varieties survived the October 2 planting date. Estimating average nitrogen levels, the best vetch and clovers were producing 140 to 160 pounds per acre nitrogen on May 12 from the September planting. Currently, we are doing lab evaluation of the plants. Actual nitrogen figures will be posted on our website when complete. Δ

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