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Double Cropping Winter Triticale for Forage

Planting a winter cereal crop such as winter triticale in the fall is the earliest way to a forage harvest the following spring. Since cereal crops like winter triticale are species that grow at the lowest temperature (3°C), they don't take long to establish, creating an excellent cover crop that will overwinter and begin growing very early the next spring. A winter cereal crop can produce a large quantity of biomass that can be harvested as forage in mid to late May. This can be early enough to be double-cropped, followed by early silage or grain corn, a warm season forage crop such as sorghum sudangrass or soybeans as a cash crop.

Winter triticale is quickly becoming the preferred choice for livestock producers looking for quality feed. Winter triticale, being a cross between rye grain and wheat, will be 1 week to 10 days later than cereal rye in maturity allowing a bigger window to harvest at the ideal stage for quality. Harvesting at the flag leaf stage will have the highest quality and optimum yield versus harvesting at the boot stage. Winter triticale does not have the allelopathic effect that fall rye can have on corn yield which is greatly unknown and misunderstood. Winter triticale makes a great cover crop to protect the soil over winter and feeds the soil microorganism much later into fall after cash crop or corn silage are harvested and earlier in the spring than annual seeded crops.

Introducing XTR Brand Winter Triticale

XTR Brand Winter Triticale combines two top producing extremely winter hardy varieties for maximum forage yield. XTR can yield as much as 4 tons/acre DM silage out yielding other winter triticale varieties (13) by 20% and 2 fall rye varieties by 50% in US trials. Below are some key points to achieve high quality forages from XTR Brand Winter Triticale:

Plant on time – Early seeding will provide more tillering and more yield. Ideal planting time is September 1 - 15 and up to the end of September. Rule of thumb is to plant 10 days to 2 weeks earlier than the winter wheat seeding date in your area. If unable to plant along this timeline still proceed with planting as reduced yield is better than no yield and you will still reap the soil health benefits as a cover crop.

Seeding Rate – 100 lb./acre. Research in NY by Tom Kilcer has not seen any advantage to planting over 100 lb./acre even if planting late.

Fertility – Fall fertility is necessary for establishment, whether from manure or dry fertilizer followed with 100 lb. actual nitrogen and sulfur in the spring.

Seeding Depth – 1 ¼ – 1 ½ inch deep into a firm seed bed and pack afterwards if necessary to ensure good seed to soil contact.

Harvest – Harvest at the flag leaf stage for best quality and optimum yield.

For more information click on the YouTube link: [Establishing Winter Forage](#)

