

Adams Advanced Nutrition, Inc.

Doug Adams, PAS
PromiseLand Feed & Seed
9187 Myersville Road
Myersville, Maryland 21773
240-818-8401 or 301-293-8444
E-mail: advadams@verizon.net
WEB: www.rennut.com



Cover Crops and Nutrient Management

Many producers who once worried about nitrogen in their manure have shifted their focus to phosphorus (P). With Federal confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) rules in place, application of nutrients,

including P, must be well balanced and factored into the nutrient management plan. Many producers are turning to cover crops to help them.

As dairies become larger and land bases tighten, producers today find themselves in a bind – with lots of manure and limited acres on which to spread it. Researchers today are studying crop rotation systems that will remove more phosphorus from the soil, making it easier to maintain a desirable nutrient balance.

Cover crops and double-cropping of cereal grains is one tool to use. For example, researchers are comparing the use of triticale with wheat, barley, and rye.

In areas where forage is needed, triticale is a good option, removing up to 50 lbs of P per acre from the soil. Research data from Utah State University show a triticale/corn rotation removed 169 lbs of P per acre, compared to 154 lbs of P per acre removed in a wheat/corn rotation. The same trial showed corn silage alone removed 119 lbs of P per acre.

To help maintain proper P levels, a good soil testing routine is important. It is also important that we know the total amount of phosphorus we are removing through harvested forage. Test forages that are removed... don't go by book estimates ~ you could be grossly over – or – underestimating the amount of phosphorus removed. Test your manure; know how much P is being applied.

Timely harvest is always important in forage production, and harvesting cover-crops at boot stage is key. Most nutrient uptake occurs by the boot stage, so it is not beneficial to mature cereal grains. Triticale and rye are growing aggressively in the spring and are more suited to the forage producer. Both triticale and rye mature significantly earlier than wheat and barley, giving the producer the opportunity to get the second crop planted earlier. Barley and wheat both have good forage qualities, but there is a trade off. Timing of harvest delays the planting of the second crop, potentially affecting yield.

Barley and wheat are good options for those not producing forage. Many states are now paying the grower to plant fall cover crops. Here are some management factors that need to be considered in cover crop systems: soil moisture at planting time; residue cover; closing the seed slot; lower soil temperatures at planting; and increased insect pressure all come into play.

Nature never tells us ahead of time if we will have a dry spring or a rainy spring. Either way, it affects us with cover crops. In drought-prone soils, the cover crop may pull enough moisture

away that the ground could become hard and difficult to plant into.

In rainy springs, we have multiple factors that come into play. Harvesting a forage crop on wet soils can create a compaction issue. If we don't harvest the crop for forage and we have a rainy growing season, getting the crop sprayed and killed before it gets too big can be a challenge. If the cover crop gets too large, it can give us challenges in planting. To decrease these challenges, be sure to maintain your planter, making sure you have good coulters capable of cutting through the residue and opening the seed slot to the proper depth. If there is excess moisture in the spring, use wave coulters to reduce sidewall compaction. Also, make sure you get the seed slot closed properly. Consider using finger closing wheels on at least one side of the row unit. These help a lot if you are planting in wetter than normal conditions.

Row cleaners also help when planting in residue. Setting them properly is important. These are not a tillage tool; you just want them to remove the residue from the row. If you set them too deep, and move too much soil it can affect the seed depth.

Large amounts of residue and ground cover can result in lower soil temperatures at planting time. On the plus side, the residue helps to conserve moisture throughout the growing season.

Another challenge in cover crops is increased insect pressure. Adult cutworms migrate north in the spring and lay their eggs in unincorporated crop residues, or weeds such as chickweed and purple henbit. Products like WARRIOR® are effective in controlling cutworms. Scout fields often and spray when you see 3-5% cut plants.

Slugs are another pest which can have an economic impact, especially in no-till. Crop residue or manure on the soil surface provides a food source for slugs throughout the winter and early spring.

Cover crops can be effective in many cropping systems, including no-till. Maximize the benefits of cover crops, manage them carefully, and they can be a useful tool in your nutrient management plans.

(edited from an article by Dervin Druist, GARST SEED ~ 2007)

QUALITY SEED... from RENAISSANCE
GET THE FACTS. ORDER TODAY!
CORN, SMALL GRAINS, GRASSES & ALFALFA
Ask me for information and prices on these products.

RENAISSANCE NUTRITION
When You Want Quality & Results All The Time

*Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Looking for research-tested corn hybrids for the coming year? Call me! My goal is to help you.
That's Renaissance's commitment!*

VOLUME 6 – Number 2 – February 2007
THE TEAM FOR QUALITY...
THE TEAM FOR RESULTS!

Movin' Ahead...



What are your plans for '07? Do you operate your farm with a sense of determination or direction... goals and targets, areas of necessary change, challenges to meet, addressing priorities to better meet your needs and those of your livestock? You are a valuable member of the local and national economy, which makes it all the more important to define your anticipations for the rest of this year. I'd be happy to work with you in this process, setting short-term and long-range goals, and then helping to figure ways that these can be accomplished in a timely fashion.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your business... and the privilege of working hand-in-hand with you and being a member of your team! I am committed to "movin' ahead in '07", working to make things happen and make things better on your farm!

COMMITTED to ~ SOLUTION for SUCCESS!

THINKING AHEAD – BEING PREPARED! Yes, it is still winter according to the calendar! But this is a good time to start thinking (and rethinking) the consequences of summer heat and humidity, and the impact it can have on your livestock. While we cannot accurately predict the weather, most weather-related sources are cautioning us that the summer of '07 could be among the hottest on record. Of course... time will tell. Regardless, it helps to be prepared! Whether we'll experience record-breaking heat or not, we know that there will be a few of those hot and humid "dog-days" of summer, which will inevitably take a toll on the health and productivity of livestock. What about the fans or sprinkler system(s) you've considered in the past and have not gotten around to installing? Is there sufficient water in your barn and travel lanes to accommodate the volume of cows you have? What about heat abatement strategies for calves, heifers and dry cows? Be proactive in developing plans to deal with heat and humidity before it happens ~ and help to safeguard your livestock from the impact these can have on their productivity and your profitability.

A POINT TO PONDER... There are lots of concerns being talked about these days ~ anything from the economy and politics, to medicine, agriculture, employment, religion and much more! We have been a blessed nation throughout our history. Our greatness was accomplished, in part, by the reality of working together and working hard, while seeking to serve one another. Maybe it is time to step back and take stock... to once again consider what makes a nation truly "great." And it never hurts to take time to consider the needs and concerns of others – those less fortunate, perhaps, while giving thanks for the multitude of blessings most of us continue to enjoy every day. A New Year gives us time for reflection and time for change!



Adams Advanced Nutrition, Inc.

9187 Myersville Road
Myersville, Maryland 21773
www.rennut.com



February 2007...

*thinking ahead - being prepared.
cover crops and nutrient management.
movin' ahead in '07!
Check it out.*