Cover Crops: The Right Choice

How do you decide which cover crop or cover crop mix is best for a specific situation? Important factors include planting date, the cash crop to follow (usually corn or soybeans), and the desired benefit(s).

Cody Beacom of Bird Agronomics drilled a dozen different cover crop strips Aug. 3. (photos taken Oct. 1)

Nathan Brause hosted our no-till field day Aug. 29, and we returned Oct. 1 to check on cover crop growth in a dozen ten-foot wide strips. Cody Beacom, Bird Agronomics, drilled the covers Aug. 3.

The Crawford County SWCD promoted an evening event Oct. 1, and will have two more, tentatively in December and March, to maximize the educational value for area farmers.

Nathan Brause will receive the annual Outstanding No-till Farmer Award given by the Ohio No-Till Council on December 5. You will read more about him in a future issue of Ohio’s Country Journal.

About 20 years ago, like many farmers his first conservation tillage system was strip-till for corn. He began using cover crops ten years ago and switched to continuous no-till for the whole farm four years later. He received encouragement and coaching from Bret Margraf of Seneca County.

“How you need to understand cover crops before going to no-till,” according to Brause. See, cover crops are critical to the success of continuous no-till. Knowing how to select and manage individual covers or mixes will ease the transition to no-till. Brause also “plants green” into the cover crops.

He added wheat to the corn/soybean rotation to get the soil health advantage of a longer growing season for cover crops. Baling and selling the straw more than offsets the cost of a cover crop mix. And the cover crop cancels out any disadvantage of removing the straw.

No-Till Conference Dec. 5

Our keynote speaker is Mark Anson who farms 10,000 acres of no-till with cover crops. His topic: “Healthy Soils, Healthy Waters, Healthy Life.” Other discussions include: managing cover crops, soil fertility, regenerative farming, and federal/state farm policy. Our goal is to answer YOUR questions. Details will be in the mid-November issue.

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Upcoming No-Till Events
Dec. 5, 2019
Ohio No-till Conf.,
Der Dutchman, Plain City

Jan. 7-10, 2020
National No-Till Conf., St. Louis, MO

March 3-4, 2020
Conservation Tillage Conf., Ada

Apr. 1, 2020
Ohio No-till (Spring) Field Day, Dave Brandt Farm, Fairfield County

Aug. 19, 2020
Ohio No-till (Summer) Field Evening, Nathan Brown Farm, Hillsboro

Aug. 20, 2020
Ohio No-till (Summer) Field Morning, Fred Yoder Farm, Plain City