

July 15, 2013

To: Whom it May Concern

Re: Corn as a cover crop on Prevented Planting acres in Iowa - 2013

Corn can be an agronomically sound cover crop option for Iowa growers on Prevented Planting acres. This, however, is not a common practice for Iowa corn and soybean farmers and is not without drawbacks.

Insured farmers wanting to plant corn as a cover crop must get approval from their insurance company to release the acres for that purpose. It is also advised that the insured use insurance company approved practices.

Advantages exist for using corn as a cover crop in prevented planting situations. Corn as a cover crop: i) can provide effective soil protection for erosion control, ii) will provide some degree of weed control, and iii) will likely mitigate issues with fallow-soil syndrome in the 2014 cropping season.

When using corn as a cover crop, keep the following agronomic considerations in mind:

1. First and most important, it is illegal to plant any 'bin run' corn grain with biotech traits (GMO or transgenic seed harvested in previous years) or other patented traits whether it is for a cover crop or not.
2. Corn as a cover crop should be planted at a higher seeding rate than normal: 40,000 seeds per acre. This will hasten canopy closure.
3. If farmers broadcast corn as a cover crop, seeding rates higher than 40,000 seed per acre could easily be justified from an agronomic perspective since seedling establishment will be poor. However, since nearly all seed is treated, incorporating broadcasted seed into the soil is important to prevent problems with and for wildlife.
4. Broadcast seeding, drilling or planting corn in narrow rows – 8 to 20 inch rows – along with the higher planting rates will result in more rapid canopy closure and thus better erosion and weed control.
5. Production in 30-inch rows will not likely produce the three advantages mentioned in the second paragraph above because late-planted corn cover crop will not likely quickly close the canopy between the rows.
6. Insure that any previous herbicide applications will not affect corn.
7. Corn planted late as a cover crop may produce seed, unless the hybrid planted is very late maturing. **Grain produced must not be harvested - before or after November 1.**
8. Corn seeded as a cover crop on Prevented Planting acres may be grazed on or after Nov. 1st. However, before grazing, check the herbicide label to insure there are no restrictions on feeding forage to livestock.
9. Corn as a cover crop is much preferred to bare, tilled ground in terms of erosion control and may be the only choice for a cover crop depending on herbicide applications earlier in the year.
10. Other crops like sorghum-sudangrass, among others, may provide a better option than corn as a cover crop in Prevented Planting acres. Other crops would be better than corn in the

long-term for the purposes of disease and insect management, improved weed management, and for decreasing soil erosion. Planting an unmanaged corn cover crop may increase corn pathogens, insects, including Bt-resistant western corn rootworm, and seed banks of important corn-soybean system weeds such as tall waterhemp, and may increase volunteer corn in 2014.

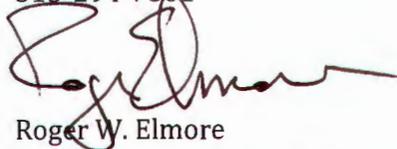
11. When planting any cover crop in Prevented Planting acres, reduce tillage as much as possible in order to maintain soil moisture necessary for germination and to reduce erosion potential while the cover crop establishes.
12. Terminating the corn cover crop prior to spring 2014 with tillage will compromise the erosion-control value of the cover crop and is difficult to justify.

In conclusion, corn can be considered a good farming practice –although clearly not the best - when used as a cover crop on Prevented Planting acres.

Sincerely,



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REFERENCES

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