

# High-Clearance Seeding

## High-Clearance Seeding:

- Gets cover crops off to an earlier start
- Earlier timing creates seed choices
- Reaches fields airplanes can't reach
- Covers acres faster than drilling



“ If you want to have cover crops choices and to get good growth, you've got to use high-clearance or fly the seed onto standing corn and soybeans. Otherwise, you have to wait until after harvest to drill and you're down to one choice – cereal rye.

I like the deep rooting of annual ryegrass. I like that it scavenges a lot of nitrogen. And I like that ryegrass doesn't get so tall in the spring, which cereal rye can do. ”

### **Matt VanTilburg**

*VanTilburg Farms, Celina, Ohio*

*Seeds 20,000 acres of ryegrass in mixes a year*

“ High-clearance seeding into standing corn and soybeans gets cover crops off to an earlier start and also allows us to access fields planes can't reach. And we aren't getting seed into my neighbor's field like you do with planes.

We like the deep-rootedness of annual ryegrass because it breaks up compaction. ”

### **Mike Shuter**

*Shuter Sunset Farms, Frankton, Indiana*

*Seeds annual ryegrass in mixes*



For more information, including a detailed management guide for ryegrass as a cover crop, check the website of the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission:

**RyegrassCovercrop.com**

# Oregon-Quality ANNUAL RYEGRASS

## High-Clearance Seeding *(Continued)*

High-clearance seeding into standing corn and soybeans gets cover crops off to an earlier start and also allows us to access fields that planes can't reach. And with high-clearance, we aren't getting seed into my neighbor's field like you do with planes.

We made our high-clearance seeder 4-5 years ago after sharing ideas with an ag engineer who works for VanTilburg Farms, Celina, Ohio. Our first version machine is on a Miller Nitro sprayer, with a Gandy box and drops on 30-inch spacing on a 90-foot boom.

Our preference is to start seeding the first half of August and plan to have seeding completed by September 15 so that we get enough growth on cover crops before winter sets in.

We started using cover crops four years ago and we like the deep-rootedness of annual ryegrass because it breaks up compaction. We've been no-tilling soybeans for 30 years and strip-tilling corn for 10 years, so compaction isn't a big issue for us. But we can still improve drainage quite a bit with ryegrass. We have a 110-acre field in a wet area of the county that needs drainage. After seeding it to ryegrass in the fall of 2012, we didn't lose any corn in 2013. But all of the fields around it had spots that drowned out. The same thing is happening this year.

We seed annual ryegrass before corn in mixes that include crimson clover and radish. In 2013, we tried a mix of oats, clover and radish, but didn't get the cover with oats through the winter that we do with ryegrass. We seed

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If you want to have cover crops choices and to get good growth, you've got to use high-clearance or fly the seed onto standing corn and soybeans. Otherwise, you're going to have to wait until after harvest to drill and that means you're down to one "choice" which is cereal rye.

We custom seed 20,000 acres of ryegrass in mixes a year, plus 4,500 of our acres. We start seeding annual ryegrass in mid-to-late July and continue to September 15.

I like the deep rooting of annual ryegrass. I like that it scavenges a lot of nitrogen. And I like that ryegrass doesn't get so tall in the spring, which cereal rye can do.

Our first high-clearance Kover Kroper that we built had five spinners on a 60-foot boom. With our second generation Kover Kroper, which we built on a Walker sprayer in 2011, we have drops on 30-inch spacing on a 90-foot boom. We also use the Kover Kroper – which has a scale and a rate controller – to seed alfalfa and to apply urea.

People ask if we lose yield seeding into standing corn and soybeans. In corn, we might get some damage on end rows

cereal rye before soybeans. We're considering annual ryegrass in a mix with rape and, maybe, crimson clover or yellow top sweet clover so we get more nitrogen for the corn.

We feel we are losing minimal yield, if any, by seeding cover crops into standing corn and soybeans. In corn, it might be 1 bushel per acre, but not any more. In standing soybeans we feel we have little to no yield loss. After all, we're also in these fields at least twice to spray with the same 90-foot boom before seeding cover crops.

We are developing this year's version of a cover crop seeder with a Salford seeder box and scales and a 120-foot spray boom. With the 120-foot boom any slight yield loss will be even less than we've had with a 90-foot boom.

The benefits of getting cover crops seeded and growing before harvest outweigh any minor yield loss.

### **Mike Shuter**

*Shuter Sunset Farms • Frankton, Indiana,  
NCGASoil Health Partnership Farm*

*Seeds annual ryegrass in mixes on their 3,000 acres,  
plus 2,500 custom*



**Mike Shuter**  
*Shuter Sunset  
Farms, Frankton,  
Indiana*

and on point rows. In soybeans, it depends on the row spacing. I think the pluses of cover crops easily outweigh any minuses.

There are pluses and minuses to everything. The pluses of getting ryegrass mixes seeded early far outweigh any minuses. If you wait until after harvest, then you're down to just drilling cereal rye.

### **Matt VanTilburg**

*VanTilburg Farms • Celina, Ohio*

*Matt was named 2016 Certified Crop Adviser of the Year by  
the Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Board*

*Seeds 24,500 acres of ryegrass in mixes a year*



**Matt VanTilburg**  
*VanTilburg Farms,  
Celina, Ohio*

**For more information, including a detailed management guide for ryegrass as a cover crop,  
check the website of the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission:**

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