

Planting Winter Wheat on Prevent Plant Acres

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There has been some interest in planting winter wheat on prevent plant acres for a couple of reasons. Some of those reasons are:

- Need to plant a cover crop anyway- why not plant winter wheat and hope the stand turns out next spring?
- It's looking like another late harvest this year and if that happens it would be nice to have some of 2010's crop already planted

There have been some questions lately about winter wheat stand establishment and winter survival. Here are some tidbits on planting winter wheat and the fall management of winter wheat.

Planting Date

Planting date is important for winter wheat. Among other issues, planting winter wheat too early or too late can result in reduced winter survival. Ultimately, it would be best if the wheat was in the 2-3 leaf stage for winter hardiness. According to Dr. Jochum Wiersma, Wheat Breeder at UMN at Crookston, the 15th of September is probably an optimum planting date for the Hillsboro area.

Acceptable Varieties

One thing to keep in mind with winter wheat, is that none of the varieties are considered to be very disease resistant for many of the leaf diseases and fusarium concerns that we face in this area. Assume that you are planting an offensive variety that will require fungicide applications in the growing season of the following year. One of the more important qualities for winter wheat in this area is the winter hardiness of the varieties. This is especially important for the Halstad/Hillsboro/Grandin areas because we are on the Northern fringes of winter wheat production and our opportunity for winter kill is greater than areas to the South. A couple of varieties that have good winter survival and would fit well into this geography are Jerry, CDC Falcon, and CDC Accipiter. Finding winter wheat seed this year has been a bit of a challenge. One of the issues for this immediate area is that this is not traditional winter wheat country. It sounds like one you get into winter wheat country the availability of seed is a lot better.

Planting Population

According to NDSU 900,000 viable seeds per acre or 70 lbs per acre is a good seeding rate. As stated above, it is desirable to have the wheat in the 2-3 lf stage over winter. It is best to have a thicker stand for snow catch to help insulate the wheat to aid in winter survival.

Fertilizer

- Nitrogen demands for winter wheat are low. Usually 10-20lbs of available N is enough to establish its needs for the fall. The rest can be top dressed in the spring after the stand has been evaluated for winter survival.
- Phosphorus is important to have applied in the fall. It promotes tillering and root growth which can help the winter survival of winter wheat. Putting the phosphate near the seed is a recommended way of applying it. Drill fill with 11-52-0 or 18-46-0 works very well.

For more information on Winter Wheat, please see the NDSU link below or contact your local HEC Agronomist.

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/plantsci/smgrains/eb33w.htm#winter>