University of New Hampshire
UNH TODAY

Field of Greens

Double-cropping trial demonstrates viability of winter triticale in New Hampshire

Friday, May 27, 2016

ADAM CRETE, OWNER OF HIGHWAY VIEW FARM, AND HIS FIELD OF TRITICALE.

Many New Hampshire farmers view trading their tried-and-true full season silage corn variety for one with a shorter growing season as more than a little risky. But not Adam Crete, who runs the Crete family's Highway View Farm in Boscawen.

Last year, Crete planted 60 acres of faster maturing 95-day corn so that come early September, he could harvest it and plant winter triticale (pronounced trit-ih-KAY-lee), as part of a double-cropping

SERIES:
IMPACT NEW HAMPSHIRE

SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNH TODAY NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY RSS

RELATED LINKS

On Trial: Spinach

Full STEM Ahead

Garden Time

Fresh, Local … Kiwis?

research trial led by Cooperative Extension's Carl Majewski, Daimon Meeh and Steve Turaj.

According to Majewski, there are good reasons farmers should consider planting forage crops year round. The double-cropping system helps prevent erosion, reduces nutrient loss and increases organic matter in the soil.

It also may provide a type of insurance for farmers. Long-season corn, because it isn't harvested until early fall, is vulnerable to frosts and other types of unpredictable weather that can damage yields. It is also harvested too late to establish a cover crop like triticale. On the other hand, short-season corn, which is required for a double-cropping system, is harvested before frosts are a possibility. Farmers can then plant a cover crop, like triticale, and gain supplemental feed through this diversified system.

But, according to Iago Hale, assistant professor of specialty crop improvement at University of New Hampshire's College of Life Sciences and Agriculture and a researcher with the N.H. Agricultural Experiment Station, whose conservation and innovation grant from the Natural Resouces Conservation Service helped fund the project, many of the state's farmers are still wary about adopting the practice due to fears about coming up short on feed.

"The reputation of short-season corn yielding less than long-season corn was well-deserved a couple decades ago, but it isn't true any longer."

"The reputation of short-season corn (yielding less than long-season corn) was well-deserved a couple decades ago," adds Hale. "But it isn't true any longer. Shorter-season hybrids have been developed that are very competitive. From a cost-benefit perspective, short-season corn as a component of a year-round

forage production system is a huge win.”

That's why two years ago, Majewski, Meeh and Turaj partnered with Hale in an effort to change farmers' minds. The team recruited eight farms, including Highway View, to participate in the research trial, during which the farms implemented a double-cropping system consisting of short-season silage corn coupled with fall-planted triticale. Triticale, a hardy hybrid of wheat and rye, is a nutritious and easily digestible feed.

On May 23, Majewski, Meeh and Hale visited Crete’s Highway View Farm for a field meeting with other New Hampshire farmers and staff from the USDA, NCRS and New Hampshire Department of Agriculture to take a look at one of the project’s successes.

Highway View, located on a gently sloping expanse of land off Route 4, is home to 220 cows that are milked three times a day and require a lot of feed.

While acres of rich green triticale swooshed and swayed in the breeze, Crete explained that he was pleased with the results of the double-cropping system. He reported that the yield of his 95-day silage corn was comparable to the longer-maturing variety he’d been using, and he was expecting to harvest about two tons of triticale per acre. After harvesting the triticale, he would be able to drill in his corn seed without tilling — an added benefit.

Although there aren’t plans for another organized double-cropping trial right now, Majewski says Cooperative Extension can provide one-on-one planting support and harvesting recommendations to anyone interested in implementing a year-round forage crop system. Farmers can contact him at carl.majewski@unh.edu or 603-352-4550.

WRITTEN BY: Sarah Schaier | College of Life Sciences and Agriculture

PHOTOGRAPHER: China Wong | UNH Cooperative Extension | china.wong@unh.edu

IMPACT NEW HAMPSHIRE

RELATED ARTICLES

December 3, 2020 | PAUL POST

Q&A with Geno Miller ‘17

December 23, 2020 | PAUL POST

UNH Endowment Investing Goes Green

July 21, 2021 | GRANTS AND CONTRACTS NEWS

Ensuring a Healthier State

University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.
The stories are written by the staff of UNH Communications and Public Affairs.
Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION CONTACT US