A Survey of Farming Practices and Cover Crop Use

Dairy Farms that Have NEVER USED Cover Crops

-------------------------------------------- New York State Field Crops Cover Crop Working Group

Cover crops are defined as grasses, legumes or small grains grown between regular crop production periods for soil conservation and environmental protection. These crops are usually planted after harvest of the regular crop in the fall and killed before planting the next one in the spring. We would like to get a better sense of cover crop farming practices, use, and research and extension needs for New York State, with a specific focus on cover crop use following corn silage harvest. It would be great if you could share your experiences with us and fill out this survey. Confidentiality ensured. THANK YOU!

Background

1. What county do you live in? ___________________________ County

2. a. How many acres of tillable farmland are you currently (2009) farming? ___________ acres farmed  
   b. How many of those acres do you own? ______________ acres owned  
   c. How many of those acres do you rent? ______________ acres rented

3. Did you grow any of the following crops in 2010? If yes, please record the number of acres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Acres grown in 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn grown for <strong>grain</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn grown for <strong>silage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa/grass hay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What livestock do you have and how many?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Number of head in 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy cattle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Milking/Dry:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef cattle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Calves/Heifers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other livestock (Please specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. What is the primary tillage system you use?

___ No-till
___ Zone-till
___ Reduced till (chisel, disk, aerway, etc.)
___ Conventional till (moldboard plowing)
**Current Practices**

6. What would be the **most** per acre that you would be **willing to spend** to plant cover crops?
   
   $ ______ per acre

7. If cost sharing was available, would you use cover crops?
   
   ___Yes   ___No

8. What would be the **minimum payment** (cost share) you would need to receive per acre to plant a cover crop?
   
   $ ______ per acre

9. Do you have a grain drill or other equipment necessary to plant cover crops?
   
   ___Yes   ___No

10. Would you be willing to use cover crops if you could hire them custom planted?
    
    ___Yes   ___No

11. If you were to plant cover crops, what plant characteristics would you desire? *(Check all that apply.)*
    
    ___ Nitrogen Fixation   ___ Fall residue cover   ___ Winterkill   ___ Spring residue cover
    
    ___ Other (Please describe: __________________________________________)

12. What are the main reasons you have never planted cover crops? *(Please rank; 1 is most important reason)*

   A. They are hard to control / difficult to kill
   
   B. Too much time involved
   
   C. Already use no till practices
   
   D. Too costly
   
   E. Cover crops attract unwanted pests
   
   F. I don’t have a runoff problem
   
   G. I don’t have an erosion problem
   
   H. Cover crops reduce crop yield
   
   I. Too dry here, cover crops take water from cash crop
   
   J. Cover crops take nutrients (nitrogen) from cash crop
   
   K. Don’t know enough about them to know if it is right for my farm
   
   L. Not a land owner (rent farm land)
   
   M. Delays planting date
   
   N. Other reasons *(Please describe: _____________________________)*
Research and Extension Needs

13. Do you have enough information make decisions about cover crop selection, use, and management?
   ___Yes    ___No

14. Were you able to find New York State specific information on cover crops regarding:
   ___Yes    ___No  Planting dates   ___Yes    ___No  Establishment methods
   ___Yes    ___No  Seeding rates   ___Yes    ___No  Establishment costs
   ___Yes    ___No  Species selection   ___Yes    ___No  Environmental benefits

15. If we develop information regarding cover crops, what is the best way to get it to you?
   A. Internet (ex. Google, Nutrient Management Spear Program webpage)
   B. Postcard mailings
   C. 1 or 2-page Fact sheets
   D. Extension meetings
   E. Articles in trade magazines (Eastern Dairybusiness, Country Folks, etc.)
   F. Cooperative Extension mailings
   G. Field days
   H. Other (specify)________________________

   Please Rank top 3;
   1 is best
   1)________________________
   2)________________________
   3)________________________

16. What questions regarding cover crops, would you like to see addressed through research?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

17. Would you be willing to talk with us further about your cover crop experience?
   ___Yes    ___No

   If yes please provide your contact information: Name______________________________
   Phone Number______________________ Email Address__________________________

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation!

Mail surveys to: Quirine M. Ketterings, Department of Animal Science, 323 Morrison Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853. Fax: 607 255 9829. Email: qmk2@cornell.edu.