

Corn — Rye (fall) — Soybean

Strategy

- Plant earliest maturity corn, silage, or seed corn in fields where rye will be planted
- Plant cereal rye in fields that are harvested first, are on sloping ground, or have issues with erosion or compaction
- Spring residual herbicides are fine to use in combination with fall cereal rye
- If grazing or harvesting for forage in the fall, there are time-interval restrictions for some residual herbicides

Step 1: Fall Prep

- Harvest cover crop fields as early as possible in the fall
- If using tillage, till immediately after field is harvested or wait until after cover crop termination in the spring
- Plant rye as soon as possible after the corn harvest, ideally before October 28th in central Iowa
- Minimum seeding rate for state or federal cost-share is 45 lbs per acre
- We recommend planting one bushel of rye per acre (56 lbs) if drilling and 60 to 70 lbs per acre if broadcasting, overseeding, or aerially applying
- If drilling, plant 0.75 to 1.5 inches deep
- If broadcasting, overseeding, or aerially applying, attempt to time with a fall rain in the forecast or use shallow incorporation (1.5 inches or less) with fall fertilizer pass

Step 2: Early Spring Termination

- Scout rye cover crop in the spring to determine its coverage and rate of growth
- Scout soil moisture – early termination is also recommended in dry springs because rye can compete with cash crop for moisture
- Terminate rye between 6 and 12 inches tall and actively growing OR at least 10 days before planting soybeans
 - If planted early in the fall, rye may be 6 inches tall overwinter – wait until active growth before terminating
 - Preferably terminate 2 weeks (14 days) before planting soybeans
- Terminate cereal rye with full rate of glyphosate (1 lb. acid equivalent per acre)
 - Termination is rapid if rye is still vegetative and air temps are greater than 60 degrees F
 - Termination is slower or more difficult when rye is taller than 18 inches, past the boot stage, or when sprayed during cooler weather
- If termination occurs on schedule, no-till planting is generally not an issue in dead, brown cereal rye cover crop

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Step 2: Spring Termination / Planting “Green”

- If spring is wet/windy and rye grows too large OR you are less than 10 days out from planting, consider planting “green”
- If wet or windy weather has delayed termination, planting “green” is usually easier than planting into large and thick rye mats that are still decomposing
 - If planting “green”, terminate rye a few days before or after planting – check with crop insurance requirements regarding number of days before or after planting
 - Check planting depth and seed furrow closure when first starting out – some pressure adjustments might be necessary

Step 3: After Planting

- Scout for soybean emergence and insect pests (when planting into green rye)
- Scout for weeds – thick rye mats can delay weed seedling emergence which can potentially delay an application of post-emergence herbicides

For questions on advanced cover cropping or different species, reach out to our Conservation Agronomists!

Ruth McCabe - Central Iowa - (515) 418 8358

Nolan Grove - Central Iowa - (515) 971 8278

Emery Davis - Eastern Iowa - (515) 250 5243