



Northern New York Agricultural Development Program News

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Cornell University Research Support Specialist Philip M. Atkins plants an early interseeded cover crop in a Northern NY farm cornfield for a NNYADP-funded research trial; photo: Jeff Liebert.

NNY Agriculture Development Program Funds Early Interseeding Cover Crops Research

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program (NNYADP) has funded an evaluation of the use of early interseeded crops to extend the value of corn and soybean fields on NNY farms.

Dr. Matthew Ryan, a Cornell University Assistant Professor of Sustainable Cropping Systems, worked with two farms in the Northern New York region to evaluate the use of interseeding equipment and crops that farmers have not traditionally used as cover crops.

“This Northern New York Agricultural Development Program-funded research took a different approach in that we seeded other species including legume cover crops earlier in the year (July) directly into the corn or soybean fields,” Ryan says.

Ryan notes that several Northern New York crop farmers currently favor cereal rye as a cover crop because it is winter-hardy and it can be seeded after corn is harvested in the fall to reduce the risk of insect damage and competition with the corn crop.

Cornell Cooperative Extension NNY Regional Field Crops Specialist Kitty O'Neil says, "One of the main challenges with growing cover crops in Northern New York is the short window for establishment after corn and forage main crops are harvested in the fall. This challenge is especially critical for legumes, which are typically slower to establish than cereal rye. The advantage for interseeding earlier in the growing season is pronounced for legumes like clovers or hairy vetch," O'Neil says.

This NNYADP-funded research is contributing to a larger project with 20 other trial sites located from Maryland to Vermont.

Complete interseeding project results are expected in early 2014 and will be posted on the www.nnyagdev.org website. Current information on cover crop research in NNY is already posted on the site.

The farmer-driven Northern New York Agricultural Development Program provides practical, on-farm research, technical assistance, and outreach to farmers in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence counties.