



Food for Thought
for the Farmers of
Fall-Line Capital

My experiences with cover
crops and No-Till

A Little History



- I'm a fourth generation farmer
- Farm around 9000 acres at Cotton Plant AR
- Currently have 8000+acres planted to covers
- Started experimenting with covers 2010
- Our yields are in the top percentage of our area
- Make the crop with 50%-60% of \$ than our neighbors
- How and why?

Almost all NON
GMO crops





NO TILLAGE EVER!!

- Pull Beds in Fall
- Freshen up beds twice in spring
- Pull Bed Conditioner
- All of this was complimented with a vast array of herbicide applications

Now all we do is plant, spray, and pull a small middle

Herbicide program is a fraction of what it once was

Benefits

- ◉ Less Irrigation Required
- ◉ Better moisture retention
- ◉ Better water infiltration (less ponding)
- ◉ Less runoff/erosion
- ◉ Weed Control
- ◉ Better stands and planting conditions
- ◉ Nitrogen contributions and nutrient cycling-(ability to reduce fertility inputs)

What Sent us Down this Path

Palmer Pigweed



- Extension, Consultants, Retailers, Salesman all had the same answer for pigweed
 - More products with more modes of action
 - Over lapping residuals
 - Hand hoeing
 - Cultivating?!?!?
 - PRAYING!

- All of these practices work great if.....
 - Get the weeds before they emerge or at least while they are small
 - Get activating rain
 - Get good coverage
 - Before they go to seed
 - YOU HAVE THE MONEY!!

Weed Control

- Less Weed Pressure
 - Out competes weeds early
 - Shades ground to prevent weed emergence
 - Good SUPPLEMENT to weed control program
 - Goal is to eliminate herbicides

Less Weed Pressure

Oat, C. Rye, Crimson Clover
NO WEEDS



No Cover
PLENTY OF WEEDS



Less Weed Pressure

Burndown: 1qt Roundup +1qt 2,4-D + 10oz dicamba

Pre: 1qt Gramoxone + 3.5 oz. Fierce

Post: 1qt Liberty + 1qt Prefix

Maybe a 2nd Liberty +Dual Shot



Pre: 1qt Roundup+1qt Prefix or 3.5 oz. Fierce



Erosion Control



Moisture Retention



-
-
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Pictures taken Nov 10th. Last rain event @2" Early Sept.
Temps have averaged in the 80's and 90's
This allows us to reduce the number of irrigation events in crop

Nutrient Contribution

- Blends we are using will contribute between 80-160 lbs of plant available nitrogen to our system
- We have reduced our nitrogen input by @ 30% SO FAR!



Challenges

Perceived vs. Real

- Moisture Control Early Season
- Can't kill covers or get too big before I can
- Planting into this mess!
- Furrow Irrigation – Rebuilding Beds
- Harvest Challenges
- You will get made fun of!

Bed Prep



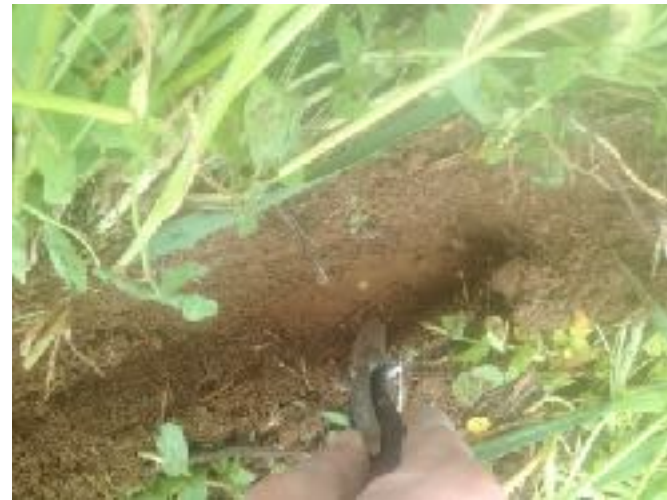
Planting into the

- How big is too big?
- Plant green or dead?
- Roll or not?
- How fancy does my planter need to be?



Let it grow and don't
back up!!
Don't kill it until you've
planted!!

Can you get a Stand????



Can We Get A Stand??



Irrigation

What we are used too



What we are dealing with



Options for purchase or build
your own

Double Disk Furrow Maker



Perkins Plow



- Result is a small trench for water to run down
- Minimal disturbance



Harvest Challenges

Can you even make a crop in this stuff?



Conclusions

There are many benefits to using cover crops, several of which can provide substantial savings to your operation. It does take a adjustment of mindset to fully adopt these changes, but the benefits far out weigh the challenges.



Thanks For the Invite!

If I can answer any questions about what we are doing on our farm or help you try and adapt it to yours please give me a call or send an email

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