

Consider Cover Crops for Non Planted Acres

(MO. Extension)-- Wet conditions across the listening area continue and there are acres left unplanted. Cover crops are a choice, if you can get them planted, to suppress weeds, control erosion and add nitrogen for next year's crop.

Several cover crops will fit Northwest Missouri depending on your goals and how much you want to spend on cover crop seed.

Warm season grass cover crops include sorghum-sudan, pearl millet, grain sorghum and corn. These will scavenge nitrogen and produce a lot of biomass and will die at first hard freeze. Seed can be obtained that is male sterile if concerned about off-types of sorghum-sudan.

Other grass cover crops include cereal rye, winter wheat, triticale and spring oats. Cereal rye has more flexibility than most. However, be sure to terminate cereal rye two weeks prior to planting corn.

If you are looking to provide nitrogen for next year, consider hairy vetch, peas, cowpeas, soybeans or sun hemp. If you are in a winter wheat rotation, be careful of hard seed from hairy vetch which could cause problems in marketing wheat.

Cover crops can be planted as a single species which is easier to manage or in mixes which will provide multiple benefits and diversity.

Crop insurance has some restrictions that must be considered. The cover crop cannot be harvested for grain or seed at any time. If you have questions, contact your insurance agent.

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