Options for a First-Year No-Till & Cover Cropping System

Are you interested in no-till corn this year? No-tilling into sod is a great way to get into a no-till/cover crop system. The following chart is composed of management guidelines that we think will give farmers the greatest chance of success based on what we have seen in the field. This sheet is meant to act as a guideline and is not comprehensive. The system that you choose will ultimately be as unique as the farm itself. Contact your local Extension office for more information and guidance on how to change over to this new cropping system.

*The knee test is helpful to determine if a soil is dry enough to plant no-till. When on your knees, if they get wet, the land is probably too wet and you risk sidewall compaction and poor germination.

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**No-Till Corn Into Grass Sod**

Remove first cut of hay at the end of May

THEN / OR

No-till plant “Short Season” corn into living sod as soon as soil moisture permits (do the knee test*)

Apply an additional 30lb N to compensate for lack of tillage mineralization

Spray herbicide 7 to 10 days after harvesting first cut hay, or at time of planting if not harvesting hay

**Apply Cover Crop**

Broadcast 25lb/ac annual ryegrass with side dress fertilizer if no residual herbicide

OR

Broadcast 112lb/ac winter cereal rye with Helicopter or highboy in August if adequate soil moisture

OR

Broadcast and incorporate or drill 75lb/ac winter cereal rye as soon as possible after corn harvest in early-mid September

**Spread Manure**

Inject liquid manure with injector shanks, disks, or aerway after corn harvest in early-mid September

OR

Surface apply manure (3,000-7,000gallons/ac. for liquid) after corn harvest in early-mid September
**Options for a First-Year No-Till & Cover Cropping System**

First year no-till into sod **EXAMPLE**

Are you interested in no-till corn this year? No-tilling into sod is a great way to get into a no-till/cover crop system. The following example is what we think will give farmers the greatest chance of success based on what we have seen in the field. This sheet is meant to act as an example of one possible cropping system. The system that you choose will ultimately be as unique as the farm itself.

Contact your local Extension office for more information and guidance on how to change over to this new cropping system.

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- **April**: No-till plant 92day RM corn into grass stubble as soon as soil moisture permits
- **May**: Remove first cut hay at the end of May, Spray herbicide 7 to 10 days after harvesting first cut
- **June**: Apply additional 30lb N at planting to compensate for lack of soil mineralization
- **July**: Apply fertilizer at side dress according to PSNT
- **August**: Plant cover crop winter rye immediately after corn harvest
- **September**: Harvest corn in the beginning to middle of September, Spread manure within one week after cover crop
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First year no-till into sod **PLAN**

Using the example above, write down your plan for no-till and cover cropping into sod. Specify the RM corn you plan to plant, anticipated planting and harvest date, planned herbicide program, the type and quantity of fertilizer/manure, what cover crop you plan to plant and how it will be applied.

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