

Kootenay & Boundary Farm Advisors

Crimping Cover Crops — Kootenay Meadows Dairy, Creston, 2 Oct. 2019

Field History

- 28 acres in cereal crops 2017, 2018.
- 1 Oct 2018: tilled, broadcast **fall rye at 200 lbs/acre**, harrow-packed.
- 9 June 2019:
 - Fall rye in flower (shedding pollen)
 - **Single pass with roller-crimper and zero-till-drill** on tractor at the same time.
 - Alfalfa-grass mix, aiming for 65-35.
 - **2-3" thick mat of crimped rye** is still visible in October.
- *"Compared to the way we normally seed it, it looks far better. A few spots could use more alfalfa."*



Field Future

- 160 acres tilled and broadcast with fall rye on Sept. 7
 - Rainy weather prevented harrow packer, but germination was good.
 - June 2020: Roll-crimp rye and zero-till alfalfa-grass.
- **Use this method to reseed all pastures on a 6-year cycle.**

Notes

- Reasons to crimp cover crops:
 - **Weed control, moisture retention**
 - Resilient reseeding method given unpredictable weather
 - No chemicals and less tractor time
- [Rodale Institute](#) usually works with large-seeded crops like corn, soya beans, pumpkins etc.
 - Kootenay Meadows shows alfalfa/grass seedlings have vigour to push through the mat.
- **Crimping only works if the cover crop is in flower.**
 - Crimping in June is too late to seed cereals, so maybe experiment with earlier-flowering crimpable annuals.
- **Crimpable Covers:** Crimson clover, hairy vetch, field peas, winter wheat, winter rye, winter and spring barley, spring and black oats, buckwheat, foxtail and pearl millet, fava bean, sunn hemp.
- **Roller-Crimper:** Welded in Lister according to [plans](#) for \$5500. Fills with water, drains for storage/transport. Pipe size is larger than planned, but the crimper spacing is the same.
- **No-Till Drill:** [Haybuster 107](#) disc-opening zero-till drill, seeds 7" on centre.
 - Kootenay Meadows would like to experiment with 3.5" rows.

Did you implement a recommendation from a KBFA event or resource?

Let us know: Email coordinator@kbfa.ca, call or text 778-771-5851