

Bulletin

HOW TO GROW WINTER TRITICALE

Winter triticale is shallow seeded in the fall into suitable ground with enough snow trapping potential to help ensure satisfactory survival and in sufficient time to establish 2-4 leaves and possibly one tiller prior to the arrival of fall freeze-up temperatures arriving. Winter triticale has multiple uses, but to date has primarily been utilized in the livestock feed and ensiling markets.

Selecting a Field

Winter triticale establishes best if seeded into stubble from a previous non-wheat crop that will allow adequate snow trap to assist winter survival. Canola, mustard and barley are preferred previous crop stubbles that work well, while wheat stubbles of any type, do not, as they can contain viral diseases such as wheat streak mosaic. Try to have a 10-15 inch high stubble cover for best survival results. Stubble from previous crops of peas, lentils etc are considered unsuitable, although they can offer advantages of early readiness, residual nitrogen and desirable crop rotation effects.

If you do happen to select a low residue field, try planting 7-10 days earlier than you would normally for your area, and seed at a slightly increased seed rate, taking care to eliminate as much

competition as possible from weeds and volunteer crops. Thicker, more advanced crops tend to develop more crown tissue and survive winters in better condition than shorter, later and less developed crops.

Seeding

The first rule for seeding any winter cereal is to seed shallow, usually less than 1 inch deep, and place the required amount of phosphorous fertilizer right with the seed at seeding time. Use pedigreed seed if possible, as it is guaranteed quality. Provincial seed guide listings will provide you with the recommended varieties, but if you have a choice, go with the newest release, as it usually contains many advantages from the point of view of more disease resistance, higher yield potential etc. Seed a minimum of 2 bushels per acre to allow 25-30 plants per foot of seed row to establish, and provide a sufficiently dense growth to develop.

If planting to provide pasture for the summer, seed at the same time as your spring seeded crops, again applying phosphorous fertilizer at seeding time, and placing it right with the seed. This will assist root development, and prepare the plants for grazing pressure in about 6-8 weeks, in time for the

summer grazing pressure. Winter triticale produces a high quality feed, and tends to stay green much longer into the late fall than other cereals.

If planting for silage utilization, the best solution is to plant the winter triticale in the fall in time for it to become well established prior to fall freeze-up. A useful suggestion is to knife in about a half bushel per acre of spring barley early in the spring and silage the crop in late June or early July. The addition of the barley adds much more biomass, and tends to stretch out the ensiling window by several days, thus preserving a higher yielding, better quality silage product. If seeding strictly for grain production, you may wish to select a shorter variety to minimize the amount of straw residue from the crop.

Fertilizing

Winter triticale benefits from phosphorous placed with the seed at time of seeding to assist strong root and crown development, and provide a better winter survival situation. Nitrogen added in the early spring will boost yields, including silage yields but especially if you are producing grain. If planting for pasture extending purposes, a small amount of starter nitrogen is recommended at time of seeding.

Weed Control

All cereal crops benefit from the removal of competitive weeds, especially perennials like thistles and quack grass. Winter triticale also exhibits the advantage of being very competitive due to it's habit of vigorous growth in the spring after the fall establishment period. Although winter triticale may not be listed in the various provincial guide books for weed control, it is still a cereal

and is usually considered in the wheat category.

Uses and Marketing

Winter triticale was produced with the livestock feed market as high on the objective listing.

It is considered highly nutritive, and has proven itself in the fields of pasture extender, and more recently as a reliable silage component. It may also find an opportunity in the production of ethanol, and a bit of research on the part of the producer may indeed prove very beneficial.

If you are using it as pasture, you will find it beneficial to graze it heavily to prevent much head formation, as the crop develops rough awns when it matures, causing palatability problems, usually in the form of mouth problems in cattle. A pass over the crop using a swather without the canvas can normally help this situation, by removing the heads and leaving only vigorous green growth. The new semi-awnless varieties have overcome some of this shortcoming.

Ensiling the crop with the spring oat addition produces a well balanced ration, and has become one of the favorites of the intensive livestock feedlot operators. Its' advantages for beef and dairy cattle over other cereal forages has now been recognized throughout the world.

Information

More information can be obtained through your local Agrologist or by contacting Winter Cereals Canada at the contact numbers displayed on the top of this bulletin.