



## ***Discover Cover Crops with John Dassow***

*2/12/2015*

If you attended our winter seminar “How to Thrive in Today’s Ag Economy: 10 Practical, Profitable Solutions” then you heard John Dassow dismiss several myths when it comes to utilizing cover crops.

If you were unable to attend, or have additional questions, here are some of the highlights.

Dassow, of Chatsworth, Illinois, brings with him a long-term dedication to the soil. He grows corn, soybeans, and wheat using mostly no-till planting on silty clay loams (which are poorly drained soils).

Since adding rye and hairy vetch in the early 1990’s, Dassow has been pleased with the results. Rye and hairy vetch both produce large amounts of nitrogen that help to meet the nitrogen needs of the next crop and provide weed control during their vigorous growth cycles.

Cover crops can greatly increase yield potential by reducing soil erosion and compaction, increasing soil porosity and aeration as well as earthworm populations, improving soil health and biology, sequestering nutrients, and building organic matter.

Dassow found the most success with a cocktail of cover crops, while adding rye, oats, radishes, sunflowers, peas, ryegrass, and various other mixes into the rotation.

Despite the myths associated with cereal rye and ryegrass, Dassow found these particular cover crops to be the most beneficial for several reasons. He dismissed the most common myths:

**Myth 1: I won't be able to control it in the spring.**

**Truth:** Cereal rye is easily controlled and annual ryegrass is easily controlled with proper practices. Dassow uses 2,4-D to control all broadleaves.

**Myth 2: The rye is just another weed to kill.**

**Truth:** Not necessarily. Cereal rye and annual ryegrass are very important for soil health and help control certain weeds.

**Myth 3: Soil will be colder and wetter at planting.**

**Truth:** Cover crops help dry out saturated soils, while active root systems warm the soil.

**Myth 4: Cover crops will tie-up my nutrients.**

**Truth:** Cover crops help release nutrients from the soil while holding onto the essential nutrients needed for plant growth.

**Myth 5: Cover crops will affect the growth of my cash crop.**

**Truth:** In truth, corn yields *could* be affected by certain grasses. Taller grasses could tie-up nutrients which could decrease yield potential, however if grasses are controlled up to two weeks before planting, yields shouldn't be affected. Soybean yields are not affected much either.

The audio of Dassow's complete presentation is available on the AgriEnergy Resources website.

***If you think cover crops could fit into your rotation, don't hesitate to give our knowledgeable team of sales agronomists a call at (815) 872-1190.***