

Growing winter spelt as an organic grain or forage for dairy cows

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Summary/Abstract

Organic dairy farms in the Northeast spend a large percentage of their gross income on purchased grain, much of it of inconsistent or poor quality. This project will investigate the potential of winter spelt as either a forage crop or as a grain crop for dairy feed. Outreach will be through field days, articles, fact sheets, and presentations.

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Rick Kersbergen and I choose a field on my farm that we planted to Winter Spelt according to the design in the application. We planted on three dates (Sept 1, Sept 15 and October 13). One Lely cultivation was done on the plots after emergence. The late planting was done just before a very rainy period and emergence was poor compared to the earlier plantings as seen in the pictures below.

We chose the field since it is one that is not a good corn silage field, but would represent a field that might suit a winter grain production sequence. Lime and manure were applied prior to planting and incorporated.

In the Spring, we plan to evaluate the field and undersow red clover as a way to establish a new sod crop for the field. We will also harvest the plots as sub plots of forage at two maturities and a grain crop.

I recently hosted the Northeast SARE Professional Development Coordinating Committee summer tour and talked about this project as showed off some of the winter spelt I have planted in late October, 2005. This group also included Certified Crop Advisors from the American Society of Agronomy.

Plot design and planting

Rep 1 PD 3 Forage	Rep 1 PD 1 Grain	Rep 1 PD 2 Grain	Rep 1 PD 3 Grain	Rep 1 PD 2 Forage	Rep 1 PD 1 Forage	Rep 3 PD3 Grain	Rep 3 PD1 Grain	Rep 3 PD3 Forage
Rep 2 PD 2 Forage	Rep 2 PD 3 Grain	Rep 2 PD 1 Forage	Rep 2 PD 1 Grain	Rep 2 PD 2 Grain	Rep 2 PD 3 Forage	Rep 3 PD2 Forage	Rep 3 PD1 Forage	Rep 3 PD2 Grain





