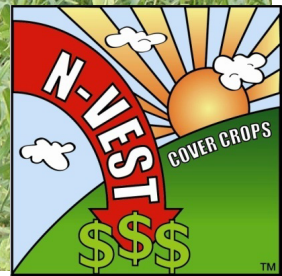


# Midwestern Specific Cover Crops – What fits your operation?

Dave Robison, Agronomist  
The **CISCO** Companies



ASCOSeeds had 50+ Cover Crop Plots  
in 4 states in 2009/2010



# Austrian Winter Peas

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Best to be incorporated
- ▶ Generally Winterkills
- ▶ Needs 5–6 weeks growth for best results
- ▶ Only one grazing/harvest can be expected

## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 60–120#/acre N
- ▶ Excellent companion to Radishes and Turnips
- ▶ Generally Winterkills
- ▶ Easy to kill with herbicides



# Austrian Winter Peas



Fall 2009



Spring 2010



# Austrian Winter Peas have large nodules



# Austrian Winter Peas with Radish

2/21/11 – Mercer Co., OH



# Field Peas

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Won't grow as late in season as Austrian Winter Peas
- ▶ Will not normally overwinter North of I-70

## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 60–120# N/ac
- ▶ Will not normally overwinter North of I-70
- ▶ Makes excellent forage
- ▶ Very good short-term cover
- ▶ Good for weed control



# Cowpeas

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Needs warm soil
- ▶ Needs good moisture
- ▶ Seed Cost
- ▶ Seems to be more reliable South of I-70
- ▶ Cannot harvest grain like soybeans

## Advantages

- ▶ Can produce 60–120 # N/ac
- ▶ More reliable in summer than soybeans for nitrogen production





# Crimson Clover

## Disadvantages

- ▶ VNS or older varieties will probably winterkill
- ▶ Some hard seed

## Advantages

- ▶ Can produce up to 140 units of N/acre within 90 days following wheat
- ▶ Earthworm “Heaven”
- ▶ Easy to kill
- ▶ Excellent new (early and winterhardy) varieties are available (limited supply)



# Crimson Clover –2

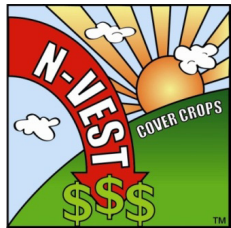


## Advantages

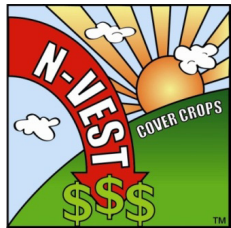
- Works very well as a companion to Radishes, Annual Ryegrass, etc...
- Deep and fibrous root system (21” deep in Fulton County, IN sp 2010)



# Earthworms love Crimson Clover roots! (April 2010 –Mason, MI)



# Crimson Clover's Fibrous roots are loaded with nodules



# Medium Red Clover

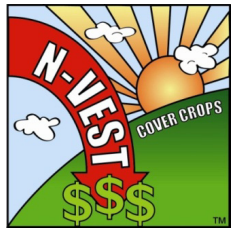
## Disadvantages

- ▶ May get too tall in wheat and affect harvest



## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 75–100# N
- ▶ Good root system–soil builder
- ▶ Easy to frost seed into wheat
- ▶ Often least cost cover crop
- ▶ Easily killed
- ▶ Excellent for forage



# Medium Red Clover

- ▶ It is BMP to inoculate seed each year
- ▶ Excellent “green manure”



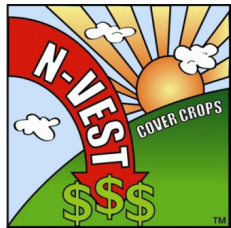
# Alsike Clover

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Seed Cost is generally higher than Medium Red Clover
- ▶ Not as good of forage as some other clovers

## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 60–125# N/Ac
- ▶ Lower growing in wheat than Medium Red or Mammoth Red Clover
- ▶ Does very well in wetter soils



# Berseem Clover

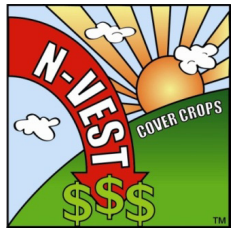
## Disadvantages

- ▶ Short growing cycle
- ▶ Dies at 30–32 degrees
- ▶ Seed Cost ~ \$50/acre



## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 100–125# N/ac in 60 days
- ▶ Possibly use between wheat and other fall crop
- ▶ Good soil builder
- ▶ Excellent for green manure
- ▶ Significant forage produced





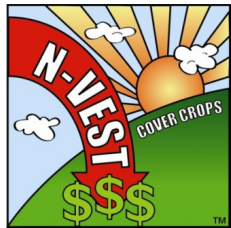
# Yellow Blossom Sweetclover

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Known to be a host to soybean cyst nematode
- ▶ Little or no seed available for 2011

## Advantages

- ▶ Can produce 100–200# N/ac
- ▶ Biennial
- ▶ Top legume for hot weather forage growth
- ▶ Good soil builder
- ▶ Easy to frost seed into wheat



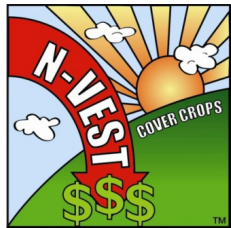
# Hairy Vetch

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Hard Seed
- ▶ Most reliable south of I-70
- ▶ Not as quick to grow in autumn as many clovers
- ▶ Seed Cost

## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 100–200# N/ac
- ▶ Very Good soil builder
- ▶ Most of N is produced in the top growth



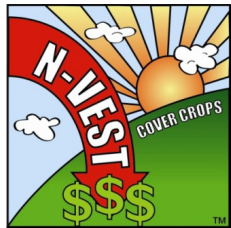
# Chickling Vetch

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Seed Cost generally higher than many clovers
- ▶ Plant 2–3” deep
- ▶ Plant 50#/ac

## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 60–200# N/ac
- ▶ Good soil builder
- ▶ Very good for forage
- ▶ >50% of N is reportedly available for following crop



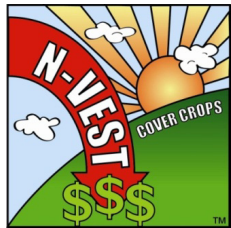
# Alfalfa

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Cost for short-term cover crop is high
- ▶ May need to spray for Potato Leafhopper

## Advantages

- ▶ Produces 60–200# N/ac
- ▶ Excellent soil builder
- ▶ Excellent for forage
- ▶ Best used in longer term rotation
- ▶ Deep Root system



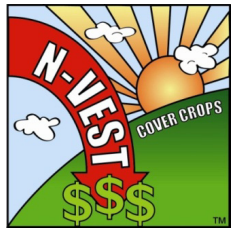
# Kura Clover

## Disadvantages

- ▶ Very little seed production in the world (but we're trying!)
- ▶ Up front Seed Cost
- ▶ Spreads by Rhizome

## Advantages

- ▶ Perennial Clover
- ▶ Produces 100–200# N/ac
- ▶ Excellent soil builder
- ▶ Excellent for forage
- ▶ Must use in longer term rotation
- ▶ Excellent living mulch



# Where to get timely updates on cover crops?

[www.plantcovercrops.com](http://www.plantcovercrops.com)

A cover crop blog with:

- ▶ Research updates
- ▶ Agronomic views on cover crops
  - ▶ Guides and helps
  - ▶ And so on...



# PLANT COVER CROPS

Learning about the benefits of planting cover crops.

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