



**June 28, 2019**

**For all New York counties: Planting corn on Prevented Planting acres during 2019.**

**Emergency statement for the 2019 growing season.**

Due to the unique challenges of the 2019 growing season, the USDA Risk Management Association (USDA-RMA) rules have been changed so that in addition to harvest by grazing or for hay after September 1, cover crops may now also be harvested for silage, haylage or baleage and meet the full prevented planting payments as long as harvest for silage, haylage or baleage takes place after September 1 (<https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Fact-Sheets/National-Fact-Sheets/Prevented-Planting-Insurance-Provisions-Flood>). For farmers, the rule changes present a chance to salvage a partial crop that can be used as emergency feed to support animals that may otherwise have to be sold. Agronomic experts from Land Grant institutions are being asked to provide statements for inclusion of corn silage among crops that can be used based on relevant factors to their state.

A cover crop is intended to provide environmental and agronomic benefits to a cropping system, including soil conservation and ground cover, reduction of weed growth and uptake of nitrogen and other nutrients. It is an increasingly common practice to harvest a crop that is typically considered a cover crop like winter cereals for livestock forage as such practice meets the stated goals of a cover crop, while providing additional forage. The USDA-RMA states that *“For crop insurance purposes, a cover crop is a crop generally recognized by agricultural experts as agronomically sound for the area for erosion control or other purposes related to conservation or soil improvement.”* Corn on Prevented Planting acres meets these objectives.

Specific to the use of a cover crop on Prevented Planting acres, every producer who declares Prevented Planting must get approval from his or her crop insurance adjuster before any Prevented Planting management plan is implemented.

When planting on Prevented Planting acres, it is important to consider the economic tradeoff between the benefits to the cropping system and environment, as well as the potential for forage harvest with the input cost of successfully establishing the crop, including seed cost. It is also important to verify the terms of any technology agreements you have signed for seed already purchased or purchased for this purpose. It is a violation of the technology agreement and therefore illegal to plant grain (seed) that was harvested from a GMO corn crop.

**With the stated goals of cover crops in mind, agronomic principles regarding the use of corn for silage on Prevented Planting acres include:**

- **Plant population:** Higher populations lead to faster ground cover and help with weed suppression. Minimum populations upwards of 35,000 plants/acre are suggested.



- **Narrow row spacing:** Though traditional row spacing of corn meets the stated goals, using a narrower row corn planter (< 30-inches), twin-row planter, or a grain drill can lead to faster ground cover by the corn canopy and improved weed suppression.
- **Planting into residue:** Seeding into fields with > 30% residue provides some ground cover between planting and canopy establishment.
- **Pesticides:** Herbicides should be used to help with weed control. Use care about pre-grazing and/or pre-harvest restrictions after September 1. Also consider rotation restrictions for 2020 as a two-month delay from normal application timing may extend rotation restrictions beyond normal planting time in 2020.
- **Nitrogen:** The most important nitrogen applied to corn is the first 40 to 60 lbs of nitrogen per acre. This may not be needed if N credits from manure or other sources apply. The high nitrogen uptake of corn makes it especially well-suited where manure has already been applied. When manure is still to be applied, rates on Prevented Planting acres should not exceed 2/3 of the planned full season rates.

July plantings are not expected to produce mature grain in New York. A killing frost usually occurs during September or early October. If grain is produced and kernels develop beyond the milk to dough (R3-R4) stage, the crop should be terminated.

This statement is similar to and draws from a document posted by University of Wisconsin extension, which has similar climate and agronomic conditions.

See [https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/grain/files/2019/06/2019\\_06-RMALetter-CornSoybeanAsCoverCrop.pdf](https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/grain/files/2019/06/2019_06-RMALetter-CornSoybeanAsCoverCrop.pdf).

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