



Interseeded Cover Crops Don't Reduce Silage Corn Performance in Sandy Loam Soils

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First author Ricardo St Aime records volumetric water content in a corn field in Pendleton, SC. The study suggests that interseeding cover crops with silage corn does not harm corn performance or soil moisture. Photo courtesy of Ricardo St Aime.

In sustainable agriculture, interseeding cover crops alongside cash crops is being recognized for its potential environmental benefits. It is important to understand how this practice affects the performance of cash crops to optimize results.

A group of Clemson University researchers set out to determine whether interseeding cover crops would have detrimental effects on silage corn in the sandy loam soils of South Carolina. The researchers conducted on-farm trials interseeding white clover, buckwheat, pigeon pea, and their mixture at the 4-, 7-, and 10-leaf growth stages of corn. None of the cover crops had a negative impact on corn height and aboveground biomass production, regardless of the interseeding time. Moreover, interseeding cover crops did not decrease soil moisture in the upper 20-cm profile.

These findings suggest that interseeding cover crops with silage corn does not harm corn performance or soil moisture. The results encourage farmers to adopt cover crop interseeding in southeastern U.S. sandy loam soils.

Adapted from St. Aime, R., Bridges, W.C., & Narayanan, S. (2023). Interseeded cover crops did not reduce silage corn performance in the sandy loam soils of South Carolina. *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment*, 6, 1–11.

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