

## Shall I seed hybrid winter rye this fall?

*Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota CCA*

Absolutely! Winter rye can choke out and outgrow even the most obnoxious weeds, including wild oats, and can be grown without the use of herbicides (we have been doing that at TBARS every year without any weed issues). The crop is much more winter hardy than winter wheat. You may have seen some winter kill in our winter wheat plots (seeded on August 27, 2014) at TBARS, whereas the adjoining winter rye plots (seeded on September 8, 2014) have full and vigorous stands. Winter rye could be grown as a cover crop or for forage or for grain and straw production.

**Production potential:** Averaged over 15 winter rye varieties, we recorded 8.42 MT/ha grain and 8.65 MT/ha straw yield in 2013. The corresponding values for 2014 were 8.27 MT/ha and 8.48 MT/ha. That is a huge production potential compared with other winter cereals/or spring cereals! The crop can grow up to a height of 125 cm and still stand erect without lodging.

**Uses:** Rye grains are reportedly used for flour, rye bread, crisp bread, rye beer, some whiskeys, some vodkas and animal feed. The grains can also be eaten whole, either as boiled or rolled similar to rolled oats (flat flakes). Straw could be used as a bedding material for the livestock.

**Cultivation practices:** Winter rye can be grown even on poorer soils that may be marginal for winter wheat. If you aim to grow winter rye for marketing grains, Brasetto (a hybrid winter rye variety with yields averaged over two past years at TBARS: grain 8.52 MT/ha and straw 8.25 MT/ha) could be the best choice, because it is used for milling. Brasetto seed is marketed by FP Genetics (426 McDonald Street Regina, SK S4N 6E1; Telephone: 1-877-791-1045; Fax: 1-877-791-1046; email: Ron Weik [rweik@fpgenetics.ca](mailto:rweik@fpgenetics.ca)). If you are looking for higher straw and at the same time high grain yield, go for Hazlet (yields at TBARS averaged over two past years were: grain 9.38 MT/ha and straw 9.85 MT/ha). Hazlet seed is marketed by SeCan (400 – 300 Terry Fox Drive, Kanata, Ontario K2K 0E3, 800-764-5487, Tel: (613) 592-8600, Fax: (613) 592-9497, email: [seed@secan.com](mailto:seed@secan.com) or Martin Harry at [mharry@secan.com](mailto:mharry@secan.com)). We have been following OMAFRA recommendations for seed rate of winter rye (350-450 viable seeds/m<sup>2</sup>) and you could do the same. The crop should ideally be seeded by September 8. Rates of fertilizers application to winter rye are the same as that for winter wheat (<http://www.tbars.net/bumperwinter.pdf>). We have been applying all N, along with P and K fertilizers, at seeding. All you need to do in the next summer is harvest/or combine the crop. It is quite an easy crop to grow!

**Winter rye for forage:** When harvested for forage at the boot stage (just before the heads came out; on June 16 in 2013 and June 11 in 2014), winter rye produced nearly 3.0 MT/ha dry matter yield with up to 20 % protein content (averaged over past two years). Another forage crop could be grown after harvesting winter rye for forage. Some of the options are barley/or oats for silage (with or without under seeding forage legumes/or grasses), sorghum Sudangrass and MasterGraze corn. The latter two crops produced 8 MT/ha dry matter yield each in 80 days at TBARS during the past two years. Barley/or oats after winter rye should preferably be grown in

mixture with forage peas; if the crops aren't to be under seeded. Alternatively, winter triticale (variety Fridge) could also be grown for forage the same way as winter rye.

Any questions? Please feel free to check with me at [tarloksahota@tbaytel.net](mailto:tarloksahota@tbaytel.net) or at 807-475-1373.

*Published in Northwest Link August 2015, Pages 7-8!*