



**WHEN FIELDS ARE OPEN DURING LATE SPRING/SUMMER, WHETHER PART OF A PLANNED SYSTEM OR CREATED BY UNFORTUNATE WEATHER, IT'S CRITICAL TO KEEP SOILS COVERED, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE LONGER SEEDING WINDOW AND MAINTAINING SOIL HEALTH BENEFITS.**

Keep these items in mind if prevent plant is a possibility within your operation:

**1. DO SOMETHING.** Leaving ground fallow greatly increases risk of erosion and improves the likelihood of leaching nitrates, sulfates and other nutrients that could be used by the following year's crop. Bare ground also encourages risk of "Fallow Syndrome" the following year. Fallow Syndrome occurs when there's no plant growth in an area for an extended period. Populations of "good fungi", called active mycorrhizae, are reduced because they need actively growing roots to survive. These

fungi depend on host plants to complete their life cycle. Adding a grass (ryegrass, oats, etc.) or legume such as peas or hairy vetch are extremely beneficial and will better support the good fungi in the soil.

**2. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS.** There are many "cover crop" options available to use. The crop rotation goals of the producer should help steer the decision. Normally, crop harvest can often limit the time we have available to plant a cover crop, but because our planting window is now early, just about everything can be considered. Again, this should depend on what the producer wants to accomplish with the cover crop planting.

**3. UNDERSTAND THE GUIDE-LINES.** If taking the full prevented plant option, haying or grazing is not allowed until after Nov. 1 (or other dates in the Midwest, depending on state or region). Check with your state or county FSA office for further info on grazing restrictions with this program.

**4. THINK ABOUT HERBICIDE RESTRICTIONS.** Consider herbicides already applied on acres not yet planted. In many cases, cover crops and other non-traditional crops will not be listed on the herbicide label. Many universities are doing more work on this topic to determine what options farmers have in the case of “prevent plant” or other cropping systems that offer quick seeding windows. If a cover crop is being planted for erosion control and won’t be harvested, the grower then assumes the risk if that cover crop doesn’t appear on the herbicide label. However, if that cover crop will be harvested as forage, either mechanically or by livestock, then rotational restrictions on the label must be followed. For more information on herbicide rotational restrictions, refer to FAQ #5 in the Soil First® Management Guide.

**Want more info on herbicide rotational restrictions?  
Register now for our free webinar  
<http://bit.ly/2rb7RNq>**



No-Till Farmer's next free webinar will be Wednesday, June 14, at 10 a.m. CDT.

**Herbicide Rotational Restrictions – What We’ve Learned the Past 5 Years.**




**5. USE MIXES.** Cover crop mixes allow for diversity and opportunity to spread out risk. Mixes also allow for reduced weather risks, help break pest cycles and prevent erosion that some monoculture species are vulnerable to. Added benefits include nitrogen fixing and improved soil health as well.

As always, double check your plans with your crop insurance agent to ensure compliance. For late planting dates and other information for your state, see below:

- Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin: <http://bit.ly/2s3PfAz>
- Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio: <http://bit.ly/2sgEtZN>
- Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Colorado: <http://bit.ly/2sIX0Vp>
- Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming: <http://bit.ly/2s3S7Nu>

For more info on insurance programs, including early and final planting dates by county and state, visit: <http://bit.ly/2nrxecb>

### About The Dirt

The Dirt is a periodic email series with timely cover crop tips from the agronomic experts at Soil First and La Crosse Seed. If you have a question you’d like us to answer, contact us: [info@laxseed.com](mailto:info@laxseed.com) or 800.356.7333

