

# Cover Crop Establishment Using New Technologies

Jennifer Bearden, UF IFAS Okaloosa, [bearden@ufl.edu](mailto:bearden@ufl.edu); Nick Simmons, UF IFAS Escambia, [n.simmons@ufl.edu](mailto:n.simmons@ufl.edu); Hardeep Singh, UF IFAS WFREC, [hardeep.singh1@ufl.edu](mailto:hardeep.singh1@ufl.edu)

## Introduction and Objectives

Cover crop adoption is gaining interest in Northwest Florida. With this, we are receiving questions about how best to establish cover crops – effective and efficient. There is a small window for planting cover crops in our rotations. Can we plant cover crops prior to harvest of the cash crop?

Objectives:

- Hold a field day for producers to view the plots.
- Write a publication outlining the findings of this work for producers to refer to in 2025.
- Determine if the aerial application of cover crops prior to cash crop harvest is viable in Northwest Florida

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## Methods and Extension Activities

The Cover Crop Establishment Demonstration was planted as follows. Each plot was approximately 0.1 acre and planting rate was 70lb/ac. Oats and Triticale were broadcast prior to soybean harvest on November 18, 2024. The remaining plots were planted on December 13, 2024, using broadcast and drilling methods. The plots in this demonstration were:

- Oats broadcast pre-harvest
- Triticale broadcast pre-harvest
- Oats broadcast post-harvest
- Triticale broadcast post-harvest
- Oats broadcast and cultipacked post-harvest
- Triticale broadcast and cultipacked post-harvest
- Oats drilled
- Triticale drilled

A Drone Field Day was held on December 16, 2024, where participants were able to see the early cover from the broadcast pre-harvest.

A Cover Crop Field Day was held on April 15, 2025, where participants could compare all treatments.

A Report was written with the results and given to participants.

## Impacts and Results

Impacts:

- 11 participants at the Cover Crop Demo field day reported knowledge gained regarding cover crop establishment.
- 4 participants indicated the intent to plant cover crops in the next season.
- This demonstration shows that cover crops broadcast pre-harvest can establish and accumulate biomass similar to drilled crops. This early establishment creates a cover over the field quicker and thus reduces erosion in the fall and early winter.

Biomass samples were collected and measured on April 16, 2025.

Establishment Method	Oats (lb/ac)	Triticale (lb/ac)
Pre-harvest	7,187	3,136
Post-harvest broadcast	2,352	1,503
Broadcast & Cultipacked	3,071	3,202
Drilled	8,821	2,875

Calculated on a dry matter basis.

Soil Moisture of the terminated crop was 9.7% and the live cover was 6.3%.

Further work should be done to validate this work as this work shows that it is feasible to broadcast pre-harvest.

