



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

CROP ALERT

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Early Season Wheat Management Advice

It is nice to see the brown fields start to turn green. Winter wheat is waking up and it is hungry! The problem is that wet saturated fields are preventing any traffic without making a big mess. Some producers did get some nitrogen on their wheat two weeks ago when the ground was still frozen. We have had a lot of snow and rain since then so we are not sure what is left. Now is the time to assess how many tillers per square yard are out there. See [Table 1 in "Early Wheat Management Tips"](#) for N recommendations under 750 tillers. As soon as sprayers can get rolling in fields, focus on late planted fields and those with low tiller counts. Those above 750 can wait longer (stem elongation) to have all the N put on at once. We still recommend N application with stream bars and many custom applicators are now offering these as an option. Weeds will also begin to grow as we start to warm up. Apply herbicides separate from your nitrogen to reduce stress and possible leaf burning and stunting.

Small Grain Cover Crops Reduce Erosion

This past winter and spring has been a bad one for erosion in northwestern NY. Many fields have gully and sheet erosion. The previous fall didn't help with delayed harvest and consequentially delayed cover crop planting (or not planting at all). However the \$30+ per acre investment still paid off this winter even with small amounts of fall growth on many fields. *Figure 1* shows a field in the region where cover crop planting was accomplished on the left side, but not on the right side. Notice the obvious gullies where no cover crop is growing.

*Figure 1: Small Grain Cover
Crop Reduces Erosion*



Source: Bill Verbeten

Winter Triticale Forage Spring Nitrogen

Most farmers have yet to apply spring nitrogen fertilizer to their winter triticale and other small grain forages. Many fields are still too wet to apply nitrogen, but when the fields dry out remember that most of the forage yield gains come from the first 30-60 lb. per acre of nitrogen. While some fields will respond to 75-100 lb./acre of nitrogen, these high fertilizer rates will probably not be justified on fields with manure applied at planting, an October planting date, a broadcast seeding, a prior legume crop, or significant areas of loss in low lying areas.

2014 Machinery Custom Rates

The latest versions of the Penn State and Iowa State custom rate guides are now available on our [website](#).

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