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About the Late-Season Cover Crop Mix

What are Cover Crops?

- Cover crops are planted in addition to the main or cash crop. They cover the ground seasonally and provide a variety of benefits based on the plant species used.

Why use Cover Crops?

- Reduce soil erosion
- Provide habitat for beneficial insects and increase diversity of soil microbes
- Increase levels of available nitrogen and soil nutrients
- Add soil organic matter
- Alleviate soil compaction
- Break pest cycles and manage weeds

About the Cover Crops in this mix:

The following information is from the Cover Crop Selector tool (Northeast Cover Crops Council) and King's Agriseeds. Note: contents of this mix may be variable based on year.
Use the tool to learn more about selecting the right cover crop for your needs.
This Early Season Mix was specifically adjusted for New Hampshire

- **Hybrid Turnip** (Barkant Turnip):
  - Annual cold, drought, and heat-tolerant turnip. High yield on high fertility soil, requires good drainage and pH between 5.3-7.5. High sugar and dry matter content makes this turnip ideal for grazing. Bred for leaf production. Useful to extend the growing season for available forage. Do not overfeed cattle on turnips at first. Do not plant in same field for more than 2 consecutive years to prevent disease and pest buildup.

- **Winter Rye** (*Secale cereale*):
  - Most commonly-grown cover crop in the US. Most winter-hardy cover crop. Best winter cover for low-fertility or acid soils. Tolerates wet soil. Winter cereal rye requires vernalization (overwintering) to flower and will likely fail to flower if planted in spring. Best winter cover for many purposes: excellent for biomass, N scavenging, weed control. Good forage, but low quality after heading. Best choice

for roller-crimping. Height, biomass, high C:N ratio at maturity may hinder the growth of a following non-legume cash crop. Potential weed if it sets seed, especially in small grain cash crops. Mixes well with legumes. Can plant later than any small grain, but goes to head early in spring – only barley is earlier.

- **Forage Oats** (*Avena sativa*):
    - Does not overwinter when fall-seeded. When planted in spring or early enough in late summer a good weed suppressor, ok N scavenger, high forage quality and can produce more fall biomass than winter grains. Needs good fertility for maximum benefits. Good nurse crop. Not a host for take-all disease. Mix with radish, peas. Last small grain to mature in spring. Compared to other small grains: lowest overall biomass, slightly lower C:N, lower tolerance for dry/wet extremes.

Cover Crop Considerations:

- **Time of Planting**: What is the main crop you are growing and when must it be planted? When is your soil exposed? Make sure your cover crops are a good fit for your needs.
- **Termination of Cover Crops**: Cover crops need to be terminated before another crop is planted. Some cover crops are winter-killed, but many require other methods. If cover crops are not terminated, they may compete with your other crops.
- **Disease**: Closely related crops can harbor disease. For example: if you are planting brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, mustards), turnip cover crops can host the same diseases.