

Gaston Grower Spotlight- September 2020



Rye is a Different Approach to Double Cropping with a Unique September Use.

The more common approach for double cropping soybeans would be to follow your soybean harvest with the planting of wheat. Fred Robinson of Robinson Farms in Bessemer City went the traditional route for many years. Timing is everything with double cropping and the ideal time to plant wheat in Gaston County would be around October 25th- October 30th. The problem with those dates tend to be that they fall around the time of the soybean harvest. When planting is delayed, there is less time for fall tillers to develop and this results in reduced yield potential.

It can prove to be a challenge for farmers trying to achieve the optimal yields from both crops especially when weather does not cooperate. Fred grew tired of having to play the timing game and found another solution to double cropping. Mr. Robinson decided to double crop rye rather than wheat, although rye is usually planted around the same time as wheat, it is more winter hardy and less dependent on fall growth. His rye crop is utilized strictly for rye straw to be baled/bundled and locally sold to landscapers and homeowners as a landscape straw. His bundles include 21 large bales sold at 4\$ a bale. The tradeoff was potentially less profitable than wheat but less of a headache for an aging farmer.

September is a good time to utilize a yard straw given that early September is the ideal time for seeding cool season grasses in our area. After seeding a cool season variety, straw provides a good barrier to hold in moisture and prevent erosion to help ensure germination. If you're considering seeding or reseeding Tall Fescue or a cool season mix check out this link for more tips [Preparing for Fall- Tall Fescue Management](#). Straw can often be acquired at many big name stores and from local growers like [Fred Robinson](#).



Fred showing off his 21 bale bundle of rye straw



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