

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Finding a Fill-In Forage – MCCC Selector Tool

As cool season grasses get going, last summer's fall armyworm feeding damage will likely become increasingly evident. As it does, you might ask yourself any number of questions: Is more grass going to return? What do I do for weed control? What can I overseed or interseed?

While there aren't a lot of clear cut answers to these questions, for interseeding or overseeding questions, you might consider the Midwest Cover Crops Council online selector tool: <https://covercroptool.midwestcovercrops.org/>. Designed as tool for selecting cover crops to fit between cash crops, it *could* help provide forage crop options as well.

Based on recommendations from experts from Extension to NRCS to private industry, the foundation of the tool is your location (state/county), followed by goals. Here you can pick from numerous options, two of which we can 'fit' to what we're trying to do in our perennial forage systems: mechanical forage harvest value and good grazing. The tool will kick out a list of available 'crops' with suitability based on the goals selected plus a calendar of reliable establishment windows. It's far from a perfect 'plant this – have success' tool, but it can provide some options along with planting information to go along with it.

What the tool *cannot* do is tell you how well each crop will work in your situation. While providing an idea of optimum planting dates, even some cultural practices, recommendations are not necessarily designed for use when planting a crop within a current one. There are numerous issues with competition with or from the current perennial forage or annual weed pressure or herbicide carryover or availability or even the pest that brought us here in the first place – fall armyworm – that will need consideration on an individual grower and even farm basis.

Other resources are out there as well. KSU has the *Kansas Crop Planting Guide* that includes forage crops and other interseeding resources. Other agencies, retailers, or even knowledgeable individuals may have similar references or ideas. Any/all can be used. This is just one easily accessible online tool that if nothing else, can provide options when the time comes.

Need help walking through it? Drop me a line. We can discuss the tool or even other resources or options as well.