

Technotill Seeding System: Direct seeding into sod

Greg Selzler owns a mixed farming operation near Mayerthorpe, Alta. He used Technotill in 2010 to direct seed cereals and rye into hay land, pasture, cereal and canola stubble fields.

Selzler's operation includes a cow-calf herd, commercial hay sales and cereal crops. His land is classified as grey wooded soil but includes areas of peat, sandy loam, heavy clay, gumbo and rocks. Normal rainfall is 14-16 inches but the spring of 2010 was dry, and rainfall during the growing season was below average.

When Selzler considers seeding equipment, he has a number of priorities.

"I want rapid, even germination in the spring so the crop is evenly ripened for harvest. Being able to direct seed into hay land and pasture is essential for my operation to efficiently manage our crop rotation, reduce seeding costs and manpower requirements, and maximize returns for our cattle operation. And, I want a smooth field finish.

"In the longer term, I want to improve the soil quality on my farm. Reducing tillage is one strategy to accomplish that goal."

In April 2010, Selzler installed the Technotill Seeding System on his heavy duty Flexicoil 800 air seeder. He chose the knock-on opener with Bourgault Tillage Tools 3/4 inch knife to direct seed into sod.

While seeding his own land and doing custom seeding for neighbours, he tried a number of applications with his new equipment:

Direct seeding hay land sprayed in fall 2009;
Direct seeding hay and pasture sprayed in

spring 2010;

Late summer direct seeding hay land sprayed after harvesting a second cut;

Seeding newly broken land;

Pasture rejuvenation;

Late summer seeding to extend grazing options for cattle; and

Seeding into cereal and canola stubble.

"Despite extremely dry conditions this spring, germination across all the seeded acreage was even and rapid. It took fewer hours to seed the crop. I don't miss all those extra operations we used to do to get sod fields ready to seed.

"Spraying hay land in the fall is certainly a better practice because there is more time for plants to decompose before seeding. However, crop direct seeded into newly sprayed sod emerged well.

"Generally, there was minimal disturbance and the sod is rotting down already. Fescue didn't rip into large lumps. Some fields were rolled, with no apparent effect on emergence. It seems like the roller runs on the edges of the furrow and doesn't compress extra soil over the seed row.

"Rejuvenating pasture and late summer/fall seeding to extend the grazing season for our cattle is a real advantage for our operation.

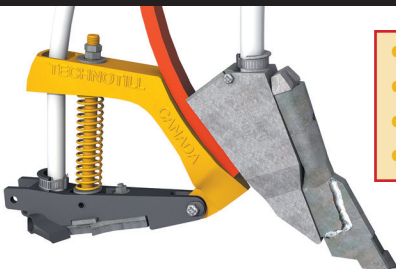
"Technotill was a cost effective retrofit for my seeding equipment. It's a simple system that did the job for me in all kinds of conditions. I'm happy with my choice."

For more information about direct seeding into sod or pasture, see www.technotill.com.

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