

SOIL HEALTH

USDA - NRCS
Colorado Soil Health
Team

Dust Bowl Region



Baca County Colorado

April 14, 1935

RA 1012 - 1011 E



Springfield, Colorado

4-22-2013



Kit Carson Colorado

6-13-2013



Timpas, Colorado 1-12-2014



Cover Crops in Lincoln County



←
Approx. 23 bu Stripper
Straw

→
Cover Crop Planted mid
August after 2 in. rain



Crop Rotation

- Past – Wheat/Fallow
- Present – Corn/Sunflowers/Proso Millet/Cereal Rye/Triticale/Primers
- Researching – Milo with Peas as a companion crop
- Future – Looking to add higher residue/higher value crops to increase the diversity and profitability of the operation

Outlook/Summary/Conclusions

- We are still learning as we look for a better way of doing things.
- We are happy with our improvements.
- And we are delighted to share with anyone who is trying to improve.
- We will never go back to tillage/fallow

Cover Crops in Sedgwick County



2013/11/07

Multi-species



2013/11/07



2013/11/07

San Luis Valley eight way mix



Soil Primers are included in the Crop Rotation

- Sudan Grass
- Buckwheat
- Purple top turnips
- Nitro radish
- Lentils
- Forage peas
- Pearl millet
- Ethiopian Cabbage
- Oats
- Safflower



Before/After



No soil structure to hold up the sprinkler, resulting in deep ruts and the sprinkler getting stuck, inefficient time management and additional tillage to fix the mess.

Improved soil health equates to improved soil structure, resulting in no rutting issues and good time management.



Managing for What You Want by Mimicking Nature!



Principals of Soil Health

REVIEW

1. Keeping the Soil Covered at all times
2. Disturbing the Soil as little as possible
3. Incorporating as many different species of plants and animals as practical
4. Keeping living roots in the Soil as long as possible