

Season 6 Episode 19 — Cover Crops: Research, Benefits, and Challenges

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Announcer:

The Alabama Crops Report Podcast, your trusted information source for Alabama agriculture.

Scott Graham
Hey, everybody, welcome into the Alabama Crops Report podcast. Simer with our two guests we have today. I got no idea what we're going to talk about.

Simer Virk
No, right. We don't.

Scott Graham
We've got Dr. Audrey Gamble and Dr. Chandler Gruener, suspect we're going to talk about cover crops.

Simer Virk
Or tillage.

Scott Graham
Or tillage. The importance of tillage.

Simer Virk
Well, welcome. Well, I haven't been out in this room for a little while.

Scott Graham
It's been a while for me, too.

Simer Virk
Yeah, we've been busy and Chandler has been taking care of stuff.

Chandler Gruener
Yeah. Been holding it down for a little bit.

Simer Virk
Yeah, yeah, that's good, but good to have you guys. I guess we have had questions or cover crops going out right now. I guess we maybe a little bit on the early side, but I think it would be pretty timely to maybe talk about some of the things that you all are doing. Plus also, from all the work you guys have done, some considerations on what growers should be thinking about.

Simer Virk
So maybe if you guys want to start with, I guess just what all you're doing with cover crops right now.

Audrey Gamble
Sure. Yeah, we're trying to to get some cover crops in the ground right now. Maybe a chance of rain this weekend across a lot of the state. So that'll be a good time to to get some seed in the ground and hopefully get some cover crops rolling. I know harvest is still going strong throughout the state, and so farmers may or may not be starting to think about cover crops yet. We've got a few trials, some that are, you know, longer term trials going out, the longest being on the station, we got a plant planted, the old rotation to keep our 131st, legume cover crop going out there.

Audrey Gamble
And then we have some trials in the Wiregrass and Tennessee Valley to look at whether rye, crimson clover, radish, alone, a single species perform well compared to mixtures of different species. And so we've had trials going for about eight years. This will actually be our ninth cover crop at those locations. And then we have some newer trials going out at several locations to look at the interaction of cover crops and enhanced efficiency nitrogen fertilizers.

Audrey Gamble
So in cotton and corn, for example, we've got trials going out into rye, crimson clover and fallow. And then we're going to, in the spring, follow up with cotton and corn and put out a lot of different nitrogen fertilizers and see how they perform in those different cover crop systems. So that can be, you know, just plain urea fertilizer compared to those with a Ace inhibitor.

Audrey Gamble
So the release fertilizer is kind of a different variety to see that fertility by cover crop interaction. So those are some of the trials that we're working on getting planted within the next couple weeks, I would say. And then I know Chandler's got a lot going and and we've got some together going out as well.

Chandler Gruener
Yeah. Start with the one we got together. We're still doing a little bit more work with that living mulch system. And so we're kind of doing a little bit more of the agronomic side. So that's what my PhD background is in. And so bringing some of the ideas I have and then working together with Audrey here is like we're trying to put out some of them in the southern sandy soils, trying to help improve different aspects, but then also combine it with nitrogen information to see if we can get a benefit from them.

Chandler Gruener
Other cover crop trials are going out are kind of primarily focused around looking at jassid if they overwinter. So continue some of that work we did last year and so we're just monitoring throughout the state, especially in the southern part of the state, to see if we can get any insects to overwinter on any of the cover crops.

Chandler Gruener
Hopefully the data follows the same trend as last year. And those too cold and they didn't make it. But the cover crops made it, jassid's did not. To be clear. But yeah, hopefully that trend continues. And then yeah, we've been trying to drill some in. So yeah, speaking about dry weather, we've been using no-till drill, getting a few and hoping for the rains to come in this weekend.

Scott Graham
So today is Wednesday, October the 28th. Yeah. So whenever this comes out, the weekend may have already.

Simer Virk
Hopefully this will come by next week.

Scott Graham
Going to be a spooky Saturday right?

Simer Virk
Yeah they've been pretty cool.

Audrey Gamble
Very cool.

Scott Graham
Halloween Saturday.

Audrey Gamble
What are you dressing this guy?

Scott Graham
I'm going to be a plow.

Scott Graham
They go first, they go plow.

Audrey Gamble
I actually, I, I was teaching my soils class earlier this this week and I said, guys, we've got a really spooky topic for Halloween this week. Soil erosion.

Simer Virk
Oh.

Scott Graham

Well, speaking of that, you mentioned Tennessee Valley. You've got eight going on the nine years of single species versus mixtures. So you said to seeing if there as good alone. What are you looking at. How do you compare was?

Audrey Gamble
Yeah the that's a really good question. So that's based on soil properties. And then also crop yields is what we monitor. And so if we think about cover crops and the benefits that we get from them, a lot of times it takes five, six, seven years in order to accrue those benefits. So there's some instances where early on in those trials, after three and four years, we didn't have any differences in solar organic matter, for example.

Audrey Gamble
But my one of my graduate students, he's been taking samples after seven and eight years. And we're seeing improvements in organic matter, especially in our multi-species cover crops in our crimson, crimson clover cover crops. So starting to see some benefits in terms of the soil organic matter, which of course has benefits for nutrient cycling and moisture retention and all of those good things, in terms of crop yields, there's some years where we see a benefit, in some years where we don't, again, and, the mixtures have performed pretty well in terms of peanut yields.

Audrey Gamble
Cotton yield. Soybean not as as much influence up in the Tennessee Valley. But there are some instances where we've, we've seen a yield benefit in the cover crop mixtures, but also in a plain rye cover crop. And so when you're producer thinking about what benefits you want to to get and which ones might have the most influence on yield, rye is going to be a really good one in terms of biomass production.

Audrey Gamble
And if you need that long lasting residue for moisture retention and for weed suppression, kind of to last long throughout the system, nothing is going to beat rye. And it's a consistent performer in terms of biomass production. There's not much that would outperform it in terms of consistency from year to year. You know, if we think about dry years, wet years, cold years, warm years.

Audrey Gamble
We tend to get some good biomass production out of rye.

Scott Graham
So Simer I'm not taking the soils class since the spring, the fall of 2011.

Simer Virk
Yeah. She's teaching it in the spring.

Simer Virk
Online.

Scott Graham
Got too many extension meetings. So excuse me. Perhaps ignorance, but, increasing the soil organic matter. Is that simply higher biomass plants that you're growing?

Audrey Gamble
Yeah, it it has a lot to do with the total amount of biomass. It's added above and below.

Audrey Gamble
And you got to think about the below, because a lot of what actually ends up being stored in the soil is from that belowground biomass above ground biomass can contribute as well.

Scott Graham
A crimson clover you mentioned is doing good by itself. It's just got a big fibrous root system.

Audrey Gamble
It's got a fibrous root system. And then it's also well it's got a tap root system, but it's got a really good, amount of, of rye. Excuse me. It's got a really good amount of root biomass, but also the residues have, the residue quality plays a role in that as well. So for example the legumes have a lower carbon nitrogen ratio.

Audrey Gamble
And so organisms tend to break that down faster. Which there's still some protection of that. Organic matter is it's being kind of broken down into smaller and smaller components by so organisms, you know, we can have protection of that organic matter under the soil surface. But physical production and, kind of chemical protection is that organic matter kind of sticks to clay surface clay surfaces that are in the soil.

Audrey Gamble
So, it's the type of residue, but also the quality of that residue that has an influence on how much organic matter gets stored.

Scott Graham
And I was just thinking, you know, our experiment stations, thankfully, are pretty flat, right? Which we need to eliminate that from. You know, we're doing research, but then it's kind of hard to get long term understandings on different types of cover with erosion when we don't have highly eroded soils.

Audrey Gamble
Right, right. But I do think that's a pretty

Scott Graham
Kind of we kind of know, like, hey, if you put something in there a whole lot better than nothing.

Audrey Gamble
Right? Right. And I think producers know the areas that are maybe most prone to to soil erosion on their farms.

Simer Virk
Yeah, yeah.

Audrey Gamble
And so I, I just talked about how it takes a long time to see those benefits accrue in terms of soil organic matter storage and building soil health and everything kind of those benefits of cover crops.

Scott Graham
But not with erosion.

Audrey Gamble

But a lot of, well, not with erosion. And then also one thing that we kind of forget to think about is the opposite trend. So if we let it all erode over time, you know, that's a loss in productivity, that's a loss of organic matter, that's a loss of nutrients that occurs kind of slowly over time as well.

Audrey Gamb
So there's kind of the negative impacts of not keeping your soil covered and losing the most productive part, because it takes hundreds of years for an inch of topsoil to form. And if we lose it, it's not going to be in our lifetimes that we get it. We just.

Scott Graham
I guess not for us, but back home in the Delta. They just don't need the Midwest to understand this cover crop thing so they can keep getting their topsoil coming down the river.

Audrey Gamble
Oh yeah. So yeah, you can be the beneficiary of soil erosion.

Scott Graham
Unfortunately, all theirs and Mississippi just goes to the Gulf. I guess. Right. It doesn't really do em.

Simer Virk
All right. I think I asked you last year, I remember this, but what percent of our growers or farmland, is actually we're using covered crops on in the state of Alabama.

Audrey Gamble
It depends on what numbers you're looking at. But I think based on the last census. And the other consideration is do you include areas that are in. We were not and so I, I, I did not come prepared with the exact numbers. But I want to say, if you take the amount of land that's under production in the state of Alabama and the amount of land that is planted in cover crops in Alabama, and then you subtract off land that's planted in wheat because it's land that's covered, just not in a cover crop.

Audrey Gamble
You end up around 17% of the state of land that's under cover crops. And the other kind of complication to that is that you also have a lot of land in winter grazing that may or may not be considered cover crops as well. So yeah.

Simer Virk
For some reason I thought that numbers low that I probably would be like 40 or 50% growers using cover crops on their farms and stuff like that.

Audrey Gamble
There's still a lot of land that's that's not under a cover crop. But like I said, I, I know a lot of land is going to be if you've got cattle, you're going to be planting forages that may or may not be managed as a cover crop.

Simer Virk
Okay.

Audrey Gamble
So this could be debated for a long time. We can debate it right now. Chandler what what what's a cover crop?

Scott Graham
Define Soil health. we can't define cover crops.

Audrey Gamble
Regenerative.

Simer Virk
Yeah, yeah.

Audrey Gamble
But I think you want to leave some amount of residue on the soil at at the time of cash crop planting for it to be considered a cover crop. But at the same time, if you're planted in wheat or if you're planting in another winter cash crop, or if you're planted in winter grazing, that's a that's still a cover to prevent erosion on the soil.

Audrey Gamble
So there's still been.

Simer Virk
So are there growers may fall into different categories. Other growers who are not doing anything at all, just leaving it fallow. And then there are some doing something and then like. Right. Yeah.

Audrey Gamble
And then there's some that are really aiming for a super high biomass, taller than them, really thick residue.

Simer Virk
So the growers who are in the category, the not doing anything or maybe doing very minimal, what are some of the big things that the reasons why they're not adopting them as some of these high, you know, growers who are doing it really, really well?

Audrey Gamble
Yeah, there's lots of surveys on this and cost of cover crops is a big one. You're paying for seed that you're not harvesting. You're paying for, potentially different equipment to manage your, your higher residue system. Like if you don't have if you're a farmer and you don't have the tillage equipment to go in and use conservation tillage, then that's an investment that you have to make to kind of make that switch.

Audrey Gamble
So and then the other big one would be time, time to plant the cover.

Scott Graham
Well, the current ag economic landscape we're in, I feel like if I don't own this land, I'm going to pay to shift all my equipment, start planting this cover crop, and it might take nine years to get a benefit in four years from now. Some, I guess the land for me. Right? And I never even saw the benefit of that.

Simer Virk
Because there are long term.

Scott Graham

There are people who own land and have long term and they can do it. But the I just to me, the way the farm economy is, I'm not going to do anything new that may or may not help. And I feel like for me and probably other people, when you think cover crop, the very first thing I think is erosion control, right?

Scott Graham
Because that's the immediate I can see it.

Simer Virk
Well, that's why I say the land, if.

Scott Graham
I don't, if I don't have highly erodible soils, I'm not as worried about it. Right. That's just that's.

Simer Virk
Just. Yeah, but I will I will I don't know, I think we all maybe when we, like you were saying, when we think about cover crops, like I think of, yes, it's a tool to prevent soil erosion and all that, but, like, I'm even thinking about, because all the presentations I see at conferences are people like, benefit to the next cash crop or going in that next season, maybe some nitrogen credits or something else.

Simer Virk
Right. Better weed control or retaining moisture and all. I think the short term benefit.

Scott Graham
Oh yeah they're there. Yeah.

Simer Virk
Yeah I think the long term is a pretty long game. You know that.

Scott Graham
But it's, it's convincing somebody that's not doesn't have any equipment. Yeah. To borrow invest and all that stuff just to get another week or two weeks of water or moisture, you know, like I don't know, I just if cotton was a dollar and soybeans were I don't know what soybean prices should be $18, you know, people would be, hey, we'd be all about it.

Scott Graham
But yeah, I don't know. To me, if you're not already set up to do it, that's just another upfront cost.

Simer Virk
So based on y'all's experience so far, so many years of you're working with crops, all that especially for our state of Alabama. What are some of the big things you think growers should be considering?

Chandler Gruener
Well, you mentioned at the beginning about time we were like, we're just now getting to the timing. So, you know, in the realm you working with precision ag and drones let's, you know, an a good consideration like when we get these timely rains, like let's say you have a soybean out there you haven't been able to quite cut yet.

Chandler Gruener

You could fly down with the drone. And then we get these rains this weekend. And after you cut the soybeans, you get a little more residue to cover up the seeds a little bit better. And then you get the moisture from the rain that can help you know and prove the time. So that time was a big factor of why people don't adopt it and equipment.

Chandler Gruener
So you now you don't need that no till drill. You don't need all that thing. You got that drone out there, you can change the timing. You can change the equipment. So maybe when you have that time you could actually go do it. So that's some of the innovative things that are maybe coming down the road here. That would help with some of these adoption barriers.

Simer Virk
And I've been seeing here in Alabama a lot of kind of drone seeding starting to happen. Hopefully we'll see more increase. But we're still learning a lot. And you know, we don't know the rates that are really effective with the drones and other stuff. So there's still a lot to learn. I usually tell people to proceed with caution on some of those.

Audrey Gamble
Yeah. I think a few years ago I really thought that wasn't going to be a feasible method for planting, but seeing all the companies that have come up, it's here's more and more cases. Yeah. For drone use, for seeding and spraying.

Simer Virk
Yeah. So what about the species and few other things already.

Audrey Gamble
I was, I was talking to a couple of the seed companies yesterday just to see kind of where their sales were at. This year. I think there's been more I think there is becoming more attention to not just species selection, but variety selection. So for some earlier maturing varieties, like earlier maturing ryes, like Florida 401, Florida, 405 for earlier maturing crimson clovers like a AU sunrise.

Audrey Gamble
There's people asking for more of that. And so I think sales have been good for those seed. I think still the vast majority of what goes out is probably a lot of variety not specified. But, I think there is more attention to that because even within different species, we can have, varieties that work better within our system in terms of maybe late planting and an early termination, some, some species that mature a little bit quicker.

Audrey Gamble
And yeah, I think it goes back to the benefits and what you're trying to achieve. And if it's if it's moisture retention, which is a goal for a lot of our producers, then you can't. To me, you can't be right. You've got good biomass production. You've got, high carbon and nitrogen ratio. But if you're trying to get a nitrogen benefit, obviously a legume like crimson clover or hairy vetch, those are also tried and true species to plant.

Audrey Gamble
The benefit you talked about the immediate benefits for nitrogen. I think with input prices the way they are that's a really good consideration. And there's. How can I put this. There's management practices that producers can put into play to maximize their likelihood of getting a benefit. So they're probably going to get no more than 30 to 40 pounds of nitrogen benefit.

Audrey Gamble
But that can be that can pay for the cost of seed.

Simer Virk
And we were talking about I remember you mentioning when we were doing some of the drone stuff, I asked about some species. You said there are USDA or NRCS. They have these mixes that they pay. There's a commercial share or something.

Audrey Gamble
Yeah, absolutely. A farmers are able to go to NRCS and and apply for cost share or apply for incentive payments for cover cropping. And so, you know, if if you're a producer and you haven't done that, I encourage you to reach out to county NRCS.

Simer Virk
So the requirement is just like as long as they're using those mixes that they recommend, it depends.

Audrey Gamble
Like sometimes there's payments for single species cover crops as well. Okay. But if you're a farmer that's already gotten payments for three years for single species cover crops, you're not going to be eligible for those anymore on the same pieces of land. And so, there can be incentives just to, kind of level level up, although I hate to use that term.

Audrey Gamble
But to switch to, cover crop mixture, and still receive payments for that. Okay. And cover crop mixtures and include it has to be at least a three species and it has to include at least two broad categories of cover crops. So that could be two small grains and a legume. It could be a small grain legume.

Audrey Gamble
In Nebraska it could be two legumes. In Nebraska. It just needs to be some combination of the two of the three categories.

Simer Virk
Okay. So that's other way for them. Like long we were seeing high input prices and they can maybe get some N credits but even on the front end if they use the certain mixes that they may be able to get some cost share.

Audrey Gamble
Yeah, yeah, I'm sure.

Scott Graham
So Chandler you think about a lot of times for us last to this year and last year we've had we've been really dry in October, which is great for harvest but that's bad for wheat planting. Right. And so wheat acres have been down recently because I just couldn't get it in the ground. Obviously with cover crops, we're not trying to make a wheat crop.

Scott Graham

Right. So how long can we wait to plant. And a part of it is going to depend on what your goal is. But if you're trying to get pretty good biomass, how late can we plant if we don't get these chances of rain this weekend or it doesn't rain again for six weeks after this? This. Right.

Chandler Gruener
So the chances yeah, they start to go down. But yeah, last year I waited all the way until December. I had some of the last of mine going out and the, you know December plan to once to November 1st. Yeah, we're greatly down on biomass, but we did still get the ground covered. So we were preventing some of that erosion in the springtime.

Chandler Gruener
So yeah, it does go back to that goal. But if you're just trying to get a little bit of biomass and keep the ground covered, but then like we were talking about earlier with the roots and so that's a key point. So even if you get 3 or 4in above ground for I usually have about ten, 12, maybe 13 or 4 more inches below ground.

Chandler Gruener
So sometimes you maybe don't feel like you have a success because you only get that six inches above ground biomass because you planted in December. But you know, if you go out there, the shovel and start digging down a little bit, you realize you're down 15, maybe more inches. If you have a hard pan, it might be a little bit restrictive.

Chandler Gruener
If you don't have a hard pan, you may see it get down to 30 in. So, you know, get kind of take that in perspective. So if your goal is to cover the ground, get some roots down there and get a little bit organic content in there and keep it from, you know, maybe this year is not going to be your building year for high biomass, but you're just going to help maintain.

Scott Graham
Don't go backwards. Yeah. Yeah.

Chandler Gruener
Yeah. You're just maintaining the.

Simer Virk
Don’t Level down.

Scott Graham
Just stay on level two.

Chandler Gruener
So yeah we do have some time. There's a little bit of window. A lot of my cover crops are not out yet. You know I also work in the forages and a lot of our forages or we're struggling with that too because it's been dry and we're, you know, using no-till drill, hoping for a rain this weekend.

Chandler Gruener
And if we don't get a rain, then we'll be looking at some other situations of how to get it to go.

Scott Graham

You have to get a watering can and just go out and.

Simer Virk
How many? well, so incorporation is a pretty, pretty big kind of right for for getting it to germinate. And that I guess. Yeah. Are people mostly just relying on rainfall or water as that or the people also like doing some light tillage or something.

Chandler Gruener
So it can be a mix. Some people can put it on the top and then use like a harrow to kind of stirred in a little bit. When I work in North Dakota, sometimes people get a lot of wheat, which just flies out of the back of the combine, and so they just use a harrow to drag it over the surface.

Chandler Gruener
They want to buy cover crop seed and they get it to come up that way. So yeah, I could also work with like a drone seeding you if you drone seed and maybe after you harvest, you could drive a light harrow over the top to kind of scratch it and a little bit so that can help, drilling it shallow, hoping for rain.

Chandler Gruener
Rain can help get it in, you know, but drilling, getting better seed to soil contact is always going to be a little bit better than just broadcast over the surface because you're just relying on. No or you're relying on rain. Yeah. We don't get rain like you mentioned the next six weeks. And yeah, we have nothing. So getting it down in moisture just like crop planting, you have a better odds of success.

Chandler Gruener
But you know, there's kind of a trade off of, you know, timing. If you do a drone application and get it in early, or maybe you catch a rain or you get some residue on top of it has some moisture in it that could help you out.

Simer Virk
Okay. Yeah. What about rates? Are there any general recommendations.

Audrey Gamble
We have online? We have, cover crops for Alabama publication that has some recommended seeding. Right.

Simer Virk
When was it updated?

Audrey Gamble
Chandler, I don't I don't know these things anymore.

Simer Virk
I brought it up so that way it's on Chandler's radar.

Audrey Gamble
Oh, there you go. It has, some recommended seeding rates for different species. And one big thing that we, we did in the last update, whatever year that was, was reduce, the recommended seeding rates for small grains because we know based on research, but also what producers see throughout the state that we can we don't need to plant 90 pounds of rye or oat to get really excellent biomass production.

Audrey Gamble
And we can reduce seed cost a lot by planting, you know, 30, 40 pounds of, of rye or oat or a combination and still get really good biomass production. So that's one of the big updates. But there's a variety of different species within that publication. Cover crops for Alabama, with seeding rate recommendations.

Scott Graham
You know, cover crops are a long term deal. So they can't update one every ten years.

Simer Virk
But you got to have the data for sure.

Simer Virk
All right. Well, we get five minutes or so some other I think main things again people should consider again. Would you consider we're still kind of in the early right now or are we kind of in the where people should be?

Audrey Gamble
Well, if we're just thinking about like the optimum time to plant a lot of our seeds, we're getting on the late side, you could say for like the optimal time to plant things like crimson clover. But we're still certainly in a good range to be planting, in a practical range to be planting. We very rarely get our cover crops out at the ideal time for, for biomass.

Simer Virk
So when we talk early season, when we talk about row crops, you know, we got we usually talk about hey, past June 15th, we're not you know, this and that. Are there certain like cut offs or some dates like for us down here to like for cover crop. Hey you are in mid-November. At that point you might as well just not waste, you know, time and money on this.

Audrey Gamble
I think that goes back to what Chandler said. I think for optimum biomass production. Yeah, we I really try to get stuff out by the second week in November, but there's still, at least for erosion prevention, just getting some. Yeah, we can get get some level of soil protection. It doesn't take a lot of residue on the soil surface to prevent erosion.

Audrey Gamble
You know, you get a there's a reason that conservation tillage is considered in 30% residue cover or more, because 30% cover on the soil does a tremendous amount to protect the erosion. So even a little bit of cover goes a long way.

Simer Virk
Yeah, yeah. Okay.

Scott Graham
That goes back to Chandler's don't go down level. Just stay on the same level.

Simer Virk
You know she made a good point there. It's like a lot of times we always are looking for improvement, whether that's yield or something. Right. But if it's keeping something there that's also an improvement in itself. Yeah. Somebody and I'm going to we might go a little bit off topic here for a second. I thought about this.

Simer Virk
I was working out of the gym last week, and somebody said something about age and how they're not able to progress and their weights or something. And another guy came and he said, you know, that's a progression, actually, that you're able to sustain what you were able to do in 30s and now you're 40. That's actually an improvement. Yeah.

Simer Virk
So that kind of made me thought about that. We never we always looking for this. Well is there a positive on this. Whereas you know like Audrey was saying a lot of times it's maybe that it's just maintaining it there. Yeah. You know. Yeah. So pretty. Well we probably need to start thinking about our trials that way too.

Simer Virk
Sometimes.

Scott Graham
Well, I don't I don't I don't want to increase yield. I just try to increase your ability to maintain your potential.

Simer Virk
Your potential, you know? Yeah.

Scott Graham
That's right.

Simer Virk
Yeah, yeah. All right, last thing before we go. You mentioned about Jassids. Scott is there any considerations or do we not know enough yet or?

Scott Graham
We learned nothing last year.

Scott Graham
So last year we had a historic cold. It got, freezing in homestead, Florida, which, if you're familiar with Florida, is way down yonder. And so, you know, I've heard reports of spraying Jassids in okra down there in like March or April of 2025. And this year it was like mid-June before they started spraying.

Scott Graham
So I think we had just an anomaly. I hope we did not, this year looks like it could be best case scenario for jassids. We'll just have to see. But.

Simer Virk
We're going to have a warmer winter.

Chandler Gruener
Or so. Yeah. The climate podcast. Yeah. We are predicting a little bit warmer and a little bit more moisture. And so we are in a drought. So we are behind. So it comes back cover. Got plenty to wear a little bit behind. So even though we got some hurricane rains we're slowly catching up. And so they predicted in the springtime we'll catch up a lot of the rain since a little bit better temperature.

Chandler Gruener
So that should be good for cover crop growth.

Scott Graham
Yeah.

Audrey Gamble
But I think it's worth talking about some of the negatives that can occur with cover crops as well. And well Scott's clapping. Yeah. I can't see him, but, there are insect issues that can come up and cover crop systems. And so being aware of that and making sure that you control those insects when they come about, because you do have a green bridge going from harvest into to your planting season.

Audrey Gamble
You have green living cover that can it can promote beneficial insects, but it can also promote pest insects.

Scott Graham
So a lot of a lot of times below ground insects. Yeah. Beneficial is don't really do a lot. And so if you're matching if you got legume cover and a legume crop or a grass cover and a grass crop, you're bringing in insects that like that type of problem anyway. And so when they're below ground, it's just a lot harder to deal with them.

Scott Graham
So yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Of course, if you don't have I've learned this trying to plant my own trials. If you don't have your planter dialed in, exactly right to plan in the residue can be difficult to get a good stand.

Simer Virk
I thought you say I learned in my own cover crop planter trials.

Scott Graham
What's what I'm talking about? Planting into the cover crop. If you don't have that planter dialed in just right. Oh, yeah.

Simer Virk
Oh, it's.

Scott Graham
All that it can be.

Simer Virk
That's what I get. Asked a lot. Planter setup for planting into heavy residue. All that. That is a completely different game.

Scott Graham
Planting. You probably can't high speed into it either.

Simer Virk

Well, not high speed. You run out of a lot of settings on a normal planter when you're trying to plant it into you. Yeah, a heavy biomass. Yeah. So there's some additional attachments and all that. And people have done their own modifications on their equipment to, you know, so.

Scott Graham
That's one thing I always like about light when you have your cover crop field days and they'll some farmer will bring his planter or whatever, and you see all the crazy stuff they figured out and just kind of made themselves and put it on there is pretty neat.

Simer Virk
Yeah, yeah, yeah. All right. Good deal. Well, appreciate you all. You want to close us, level us down.

Scott Graham
Level down. Any anything else, Real quick? Well, thank you all for being here. Appreciate your time. And, as always, if any of us with Alabama extension could do anything to help, please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know.

Announcer:

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