

NO-TILL DRILL AVAIBALE FOR USE IN ORLEANS COUNTY



Use the Sunflower 9412 no-till drill to:

- 🚜 Establish a cover crop on annual crop land
- 🚜 Rotate or convert annual crop land to perennial crop
- 🚜 Improve hay or pasture by adding legumes or a legume/grass mix
- 🚜 Establish legumes (i.e. soybeans) or cereal grains without primary tillage

For more information, please **contact Emily Irwin** at 802-624-7022 or emily.irwin@vt.nacdnet.net

The Orleans County Conservation District has a No-Till Drill for rent. Rented on a first come first serve basis at rate of \$7/ac.

- The drill has two seed boxes – one for larger grass seed, and one for small legume seeds.
- The 3876 lb drill is 10 ft wide and requires at least a 100 HP tractor with a pin and 3-point hitch.
- It is the farmer's responsibility to maintain the equipment and to address any preventable damage and repairs before it goes to the next farm.
- It is the responsibility of each farmer under the contract to pick up the drill from the previously contracted farmer. This requires at least a ¾ ton truck.
- Each renter will be asked to estimate their usage time before they rent the drill, and the district reserves the right to set the duration of each rental on a case-by-case basis.
- Grant resources are available. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (VAAFMM) Farm Agronomic Practices Program (FAP) grant program will pay \$12/acre for no-till pasture and hayland renovation. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also has a conservation practice called, "Forage and Biomass Planting"
- It is the farmer's responsibility to apply for these programs (one or the other, not both, depending on the situation) separately from their agreement with the district, although we are happy to help navigate the application process.

Soil Preparation

- Make sure that the soil nutrients are there to facilitate new growth; ideally take a soil test the year before you plan to use the no-till drill, especially if you want to plant legumes

Timing

- NRCS specifications recommend that for most of Orleans County, spring seedings should be done between May 1 and June 15, while a late summer seeding should take place roughly between July 15 and August 10
- If you are seeding into an existing pasture or hay field (sometimes called “sod seeding”) you can often seed later than August 10th; check with others in your area to see if they have had success adding legumes and or grass seed to their pastures after August 10th
- We generally do not recommend seeding after Labor Day, as there is often just not enough time for the seed to get established before the winter
- In terms of cover cropping, cool-season grains are typically used in Orleans County. Winter Rye, the most commonly used cover crop after corn silage, should ideally be seeded before October 1st.

Proper Seeding Rates

- Most recommended seeding rates you will encounter are the Pure Live Seeding rates (PLS)
- On the seed tag on the seed bag, you will see a percent “pure seed” listed, as well as a percent germination; the “pure seed” percentage acknowledges that every bag of seed might have some inert or other matter, and the percent germination indicates that no seed has 100% germination
- To calculate the actual desired seed rate based on the pure live seed rates, you take your seed rate goal and divide it by the percent that is actually pure live seed. For example:

Your seeding goal is 100 lbs winter rye per acre.

The seed tag says 98% pure seed, and 94% germination.

Your target seeding rate would be $100 / (0.98 \times 0.94) = 100 / 0.92 = 109$ lbs per acre.

Seeds

- Typical species used in seeding down corn fields or seeding into an existing pasture or hay field include clover (red, white, ladino, alsike) and grasses (orchardgrass, fescue, brome grass, or timothy)
- If you choose to seed a mix of species, Northeast Agricultural Sales in Lyndonville and Oliver Seeds in Milton sell pre-made mixes, and will also make custom mixes for you depending on your needs.
- Examples of seed mixes and cost:
 - Northeast Agricultural Sales in Lyndonville sells a “pasture refresher mix” (perfect for seeding into an already existing stand), which includes festolium, perennial ryegrass, ladino clover, orchard grass, and a few other species for **\$2.65/lb (\$132.50 for a 50 lb bag)**.
 - Oliver Seeds in Milton sells a pasture mix for **\$128 for a 50 lb bag**. Oliver Seeds also sells what they call a “TAR” mix – specifically for hay, silage, or green shop – that includes 50% timothy, 30% medium red clover, and 20% alsike clover; this will run you about **\$84 for a 50 lb bag**.

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