

Key Points on Roller Crimper Use

Imagine growing pumpkins with longer retail sales life, good handles, fewer scars, scabs or scuffing, in fields cleaner for u-pick patrons harvest. Imagine seeing these benefits while simultaneously building soil quality, lowering fungicide inputs, and covering soils resulting in weed suppression and soil moisture conservation.

Success Depends on a Dense Mat

Treat the cover crop as you would a cash crop to produce a dense stand for best outcomes. On main season vegetables, a dense residue mat does more than help suppress weeds. It reduces ground contact for crops like pumpkin, winter squash, processing tomato, and u-pick. The physical barrier can result in cleaner, more attractive marketable crops that are more likely to be freer from ground contact defects, and aid in suppression of diseases spread by soil contact and water splashing. Therefore, pay attention to production details such as: fall seedbed preparation free of ruts, high (2+ bu/a) rye seeding rate, ideal fall seeding date, adequate fertility, and cover crop termination at the correct time.

Reliable When Used Together with Burndown Herbicides

In four years of field experiences, we found roller crimper no-till most reliably suppressed weeds when used in combination with herbicides, not as a complete alternative. Burndown herbicide at rolling suppresses perennials, germinated annuals, and terminates cover crops much more uniformly and efficiently.

View videos documenting an Indiana grower's experience in 2013:

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMAP-dB0LIKnaAse6mVU3LoOAOk9jYnF3h>

NOT for Use with Early Crops

Roller crimper practices are adaptable for producing main-season crops whose marketing success doesn't depend on early maturity (later sweet corn, snap beans, pumpkin, no-till field crops, no-till livestock grains and forages). Growing the mature cover crop biomass to ideal period in May for rolling and crimping sets later planting dates. Roller crimper practices work best when cover crops are terminated 1-3 weeks before crop planting.