

## **Can hairy vetch be a worthwhile companion in grain corn & grazing corn strategies, or is it just another big hairy monster?**

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Legumes incorporated in cropping systems often provide benefits. Several Manitoba farmers have been including a prolific legume hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa* Roth) into corn stands in recent years. Hairy vetch as a companion in corn can be a potential issue for silage equipment, but the alternative to graze is likely more appropriate. Additionally, commodity markets for corn may also warrant grain harvest leaving stovers and vetch as palatable feed for livestock however, a corn harvest with hairy vetch can be onerous too. This small plot study sought to determine effects of varying the seeding rate of corn with or without the use of hairy vetch as a companion crop to observe the dynamics of total biomass, grain production, feed quality scenarios, and nitrogen economy. Despite the below normal rainfall on both seasons, total biomass of the system went unchanged with or without hairy vetch, however a decrease in corn grain production occurred with inclusion of hairy vetch. Increased corn population lead to increased corn yield but vetch biomass was relatively consistent. Hairy vetch fixed nitrogen mid to late season which provided a slight gain in nitrogen economy, and it increased feed quality parameters such as protein and relative feed values compared to monocrop corn grazing corn systems.