Ryan & Melissa Shaw
SKS Farm
Decker, MI

- 1400 acres
  - ~400 acres corn
  - ~600 acres soybeans
  - ~400 acres sugarbeets
OVERVIEW

- CONVERTING FROM CONVENTIONAL TO STRIP-TILL
  - keep soil covered
  - leave more residue at surface
- NEW PLANTER
  - twin-row corn and soybeans
  - utilize one planter for all crops
- SYSTEMS APPROACH
  - controlled traffic
  - saving passes and minimizing compaction
  - same planting zone year after year
- COVER CROPS
  - living roots year-round
  - where/what/when to plant
  - interseeding

TRANSITION FROM CONVENTIONAL to STRIP-TILL

- Used vertical tillage to get comfortable with heavier residue
- Sold off heavy tillage equipment
- Bought Soil Warrior as primary tillage tool
- Planned for new planter—Monosem
  - beets - 30"
  - corn and soybeans - twin 30"
SOIL WARRIOR

- 30ft, 12-row
- wavy coulter units
- widened for twin-rows
- 2 commodity tank
- one-pass system (tillage and fertilizer)
MONOSEM PLANTER

- 30ft, 12 twin-rows
- Lift one unit on each set of twins when planting beets
- Built hitch adapter to shift machine 4" to center beets
- Pulls 2-tank steerable Yetter wagon in beets and corn
- In-furrow fertilizer
- Drop tubes at back of row units apply ¼ of nitrogen
CONTROLLED TRAFFIC

- 30’
  - Soil Warrior
  - Planter
  - Interseeder
  - Corn Head
- 60’
  - Sidedresser
- 90’
  - Sprayer

SAVING PASSES

in-furrow starter fertilizer + drop-tube liquid fertilizer = almost ½ of crop nutrients applied in a single pass
WHY TWIN ROW?

• allowed higher planting populations (38,000 in corn)
• utilizes sunlight better
• quicker canopy
• could use existing equipment
  • 30” corn head
  • sprayer
• later realized it was more suitable for interseeding than narrow rows
SEEDING COVER CROPS

• J D 750 grain drill
• aerial seeding into corn
• spreading cereal rye with broadcast spinner into standing beets before harvest
• wanted a more efficient approach

“INTERSEEDER”

• built in 2017
• used old 30’ Hiniker cultivator for toolbar
• added Dawn DuoSeed row units
  • twin rows 10” apart
• Valmar 6056 tank/metering system
• plants cover crops in-between planting zones
INTERSEEDING CORN

Interseeding @ V3-V5 growth stage
Mix shown here:
- 2# Berseem Clover
- 1# Medium Red Clover
- 1# Dutch White Clover
- 1# Balansa Clover
- 2# Buckwheat
- ½# Rapeseed
- 3# Annual Ryegrass

10.5#/A

2018 was first year interseeding corn and was very dry until September, so establishment was not ideal but got better as harvest approached.

Interseed mix at harvest and in the weeks following.
Interseed mix in spring. Clovers and annual ryegrass overwintered, buckwheat and most rapeseed were terminated by frost.

INTERSEEDING LEARNING CURVES

- possible burn from sidedress coulter?
- switched from coulters to Y-Drops
- found out that not just herbicides affect germination, but also fertilizer and soil moisture
INTERSEEDING SUGARBEETS

- seeding in late fall, depending on conditions

Goals:
- soak up excess nitrogen
- improve sugar purity
- establish cover crop before November

INTERSEEDED BEETS

2018 HARVEST > SPRING 2019 > 2019 SOYBEANS
“BIO-STRIPS”

- oats and cereal rye planted between planting zones
  - oats winter-kill
  - rye overwinters
- radishes planted into planting zone
  - radish winter-kills
- no termination of cover crop needed in spring
- rye survives winter to serve as windbreak for seedlings

CHANGES IN 2020

- install filter strip along Cass River
- trying skip-row 60” corn
  - skipping every other pair of twins
- new interseed mix for corn
- plant flowering shrubs/bushes near field edges
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