

## Cover crops feature

# Advice on cover crops

### New millet varieties can provide improved cover and feed says Lima

“TO OFFSET HIGH CEREAL PRICES PUSHING UP feeding costs for pheasants, sow millet and benefit from the extra feed potential as well as cover,” advises Limagrains’ Martin Titley. Millet is a valuable game cover crop with one of the highest yields for seed shedding, and two new varieties are now available in Limagrains’ Hi Bird range: Panorama is a bushy millet with seeds that shed later than both red and white millets. Magic (pictured) provides warm cover. It is hardier than other varieties, it can be sown next to maize to warm the crops, or be a flushing point.



### Beat the snow and cold with Country Plan

AFTER TWO HARD WINTERS MANY SHOOTERS will be taking a long hard look at what types of crop to plant for 2011. Most of shoots depend on cover crops to hold and present quality birds.

Following the snow falls in December it was clear that the only crops still capable of holding and driving were maize, chicory,

### Helping gamekeepers support the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

KINGS GAME COVER & CONSERVATION Crops introduced the Campaign Mix (containing linseed, triticale, reed, white and red millet) in 2010 to help farmers and gamekeepers provide a winter hardy wild bird seed mixture that also provided practical benefits to game management.

Having been well received, Kings has developed this innovative mixture further with the introduction of the Campaign

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Mix South. The addition of dwarf and intermediate sorghum adds to the existing robust cover, creating a mixture that gamekeepers can use confident in the knowledge of season long food and cover.

By planting either mix alongside the edge of a plot of maize you will:

- Create a valuable windbreak;
- Help support the CFE and Environmental Stewardship;
- Keep the crop clean (with careful advice) as only one application of herbicide is required to keep the maize and Campaign Mix clear of weeds;
- Provide a break crop from kale-based mixtures.

**THE 2011 KINGS CATALOGUE IS NOW AVAILABLE – FOR YOUR FREE COPY SEE [WWW.KINGSCROPS.CO.UK](http://WWW.KINGSCROPS.CO.UK) OR TELEPHONE 0800 587 9797**

Kings Campaign Mix.



sorghum and the perennial grasses.

Well-established crops with soft leaf tissue such as fodder beet and brassica crops started to suffer badly and the penetrating temperatures as low as -17°C did severe damage.

Each year game cover crop companies are expected to re-invent the wheel and

come out with new products often these are like pretty salmon flies designed more to catch people than fish!

Country Plan is a firm supporter of maize as a cover crop, and the use of high dry matter varieties combined with the smart use of herbicides and foliar feeds is without doubt providing a full risk-free season of cover.

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## Bright Seeds suggests adding feed seeds to cover

“This coming year, with a rapid increase in the value of wheat and the price of oil, feeding your birds will be costly,” advises David Bright of specialist suppliers and advisors of game cover, conservation, wild flowers and stewardship crops, Bright Seeds. “Now is the time to think about helping with those costs by adding value to your game cover.”

“Sowing a little extra millet, linseed, mustard or fodder radish into your cover strips will help to reduce your feed bill

and also keep the birds from straying and reduce pressure on dogging in,” David says. “For example, mixed millet (sowing at 3kg /acre at a cost of about £8) will yield a considerable amount of nutritious seeds, and Flightpath grain maize (drilled at 40,000 seeds per acre) will yield up to four tonnes and can sometimes be combined at the end of the season.”

Over the last two months on Bright Seeds’ trial site, in the cold and snowy weather, it was extremely noticeable that

many game and farmland birds not only benefited from the winter feed provided, but found a welcome canopy and structure over their heads.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR ADVICE CONTACT BRIGHT SEEDS ON 01747 873930 WWW.BRIGHTSEEDS.CO.UK**

## Game crop advice from Oakbank

1. DON'T BE IN A MAD RUSH TO PLOUGH last season's plots. Everyone panics about giving the ground time to 'weather', but in many situations ploughing in less than ideal conditions can make creating a seed bed even more difficult. It also buries dormant weed seeds and allows them to return in future years. Assess the soils carefully and take advice before rushing in with the plough.
2. While it is fresh in your mind, write down which covers worked, which didn't and possible reasons for failure, eg. site, crop or weather.
3. Think about what you need from each cover crop. Is it food, flushing cover or both? Is it to warm up a piece of draughty woodland or simply a crop to keep poults interested once they leave the pens? Is it for pheasants or partridges, or both? This will narrow down your crop selection.
4. Talk to the farmer, farm manager or contractor. They might have land in stewardship that can be game-friendly. If you get the person doing the work on the ground on your side it will transform your shoot.

**FOR ADVICE PLEASE CONTACT TIM FURBANK OAKBANK GAME & CONSERVATION LTD, TEL: 01480 890686 OR VISIT WWW.OAKBANKGC.CO.UK**

- Drill directly into seedbed with fertiliser down the spout as well, and then roll.

**HURRELLS NEW HANDY SIZED 2011 GAME COVER BROCHURE IS NOW AVAILABLE INTRODUCING FOUR NEW GAME COVER MIXTURES AND TOP TIPS FOR BETTER GAME CROPS. PLEASE TELEPHONE 01377 271400 FOR YOUR COPY.**



Bright Seeds' mixture "Pheasant and Finch" is an excellent winter feed blend for game and farmland birds. It also qualifies for ELS and HLS.

## Hurrells' top tips for good game cover

MANY FIELDS PLANTED FOR GAMECOVER ARE doomed to failure before the area is even sown with seed. The estate manager sees the game cover plots as troublesome, being relatively small areas distributed around the estate.

Often poor results start at this very place only aided and abetted by the cold British weather! Fields ear-marked as game cover are regularly the ones that are the poorest in terms of agricultural productivity and fertility.

Soils should be sampled regularly and sent to local independent laboratories or seed suppliers for testing. If the gamekeeper knows the soil quality, many

of its problems in terms of fertility or soil/plant nutrition can be corrected or improved before April/May planting.

With 50 years of shooting history, Hurrells' five top tips for successful game cover are:

- Remove cover crop by topping straight after the shooting season.
- Apply farmyard manure if required and immediately plough as soon as is possible.
- Allow to dry out, then work down into a fine tilth. Lightly roll and leave for weeds to emerge.
- Spray with a glyphosate based spray to kill as exposed weeds.