



Improving legume agronomy with cereal-legume intercropping

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DIVERSify has developed practical information on the principles of intercropping (growing two or more crop species together) for farmers and growers. These consider the factors that growers can manipulate in designing, sowing and managing their crops. Based on a range of field trials on different crop combinations, summary reports of which can be found at: plant-teams.org, we have developed local systems that can lead to improved grain legume production.

Most often, intercropping involves mixing cereal and legume crops. The mixture species are chosen according to the desired end use (grain, biomass, cereal or legume as the main cash crop). Choosing varieties with desirable traits, using national recommended lists, that maximise the end-use and complementarities between the species is advised.

It is possible to sow intercrops with standard seed drilling equipment, adjusting the sowing rate of each crop species to match your intended plant density in the field and desired yield characteristics. Reducing the amount of nitrogen fertiliser and even the fertiliser type (e.g., ammonium-sulphate rather than -nitrate) is also recommended as the legume will provide nitrogen.

Harvest is possible using standard equipment, and scaffolding provided by the cereal crop can improve harvestability. Determining an end market and how to separate grain after harvest, if required, is key to the success of the intercrop and its component parts.

> Find out more, including references, at: plant-teams.org