Editor's note: This article is one in a series about the concept and use of no tillage farming methods.

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The producers and NRCS soil conservationists from North Dakota have shared with me the recipes they use for their forage crops.

They have different forage cocktails for each phase of the growing season with a spring, summer, and fall forage mixture.

The producers from North Dakota stress the importance of grazing no more than 50 percent of the forage.

It is very important to leave a good cover of residue for the following crop. This provides the same benefits as leaving the crop residue from grain production in the field.

The residue provides protection for the soil, decreases soil moisture evaporation, increases water infiltration, supplies a food source for soil micro-organisms, and improves the organic matter content of the soil.

The rotational opportunities to add these forages into dry land acres are endless.

For our own operation where we produce all grain at the present, a rotation of winter wheat, corn, followed by the spring forage mix may be an option.

My thought here is we could plant the spring forage following corn, graze the forage from mid-June till July, then terminate the crop following grazing.

This would provide a fallow period to store moisture for the following winter wheat crop.

Another rotation which would add more forage into the operation and eliminate the corn from the rotation would be to harvest a winter wheat crop, followed by a spring forage mixture.

After grazing the spring mixture, there would be a short fallow period and then plant a fall forage mix. This would allow some grazing in late fall.

The fall mixture will grow again the following spring, where you could graze the mixture again. After this grazing period, the crop would be terminated and winter wheat could be planted again in the fall.