



# Small Farm Field Day

Funding provided by Golden LEAF Inc.

## HOT PEPPER PRODUCTION FOR CROP DIVERSIFICATION

### RESEARCHERS

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### OBJECTIVE

The project is designed to evaluate the potential of hot peppers as alternative enterprises.

### OPPORTUNITY

Production of hot peppers following legume cover crops has the potential to reduce both fertilizer input and the cost of production, while adding organic matter and building the soil for the long term. Cover crops will also control soil erosion and reduce weeds, diseases and pests.

### METHODS

Four varieties of hot peppers were plated in conventional tillage and strip tillage plots, in June. The types of hot pepper in the field trial include Caribbean Red, Thai Dragon, Anaheim TMR 23 and Early Jalapeno.

Crimson clover plus rye cover crop were planted in fall 2002, and allowed to grow until spring. In the spring, the cover crop was flail mowed. The conventional tillage plots were disked in and strips were made in strip tillage plots.

Hot pepper transplants were grown in the greenhouse for nine weeks and were transplanted to field plots. Prior to planting, 500 pounds of 13-10-10 fertilizer, 40 pounds of P205 and 40 pounds of K20, per acre, were broadcast applied. For weed control, five quarts, per acre, of roundup was applied prior to planting.

The rows are 10-feet long with one foot between plants within the row. Following transplanting, soil moisture was adequate. Evaluations of pepper quality and cost of production are planned.

### DISCUSSION

Relative yields and sizes of the peppers and the quality will be determined and evaluated when they reach a marketable stage. The quality parameters that will be measured include color, heat and capsaicin content. The hot peppers will be test marketed at the Triad Farmers Market and at select supermarkets. Desirable peppers will be chosen for future specialty crop diversification studies.