



LINK™ Inoculant - Year One Lessons

Last year we introduced LINK™ Cover Crop Inoculant, a peat-based product designed to inoculate all legumes in one convenient package. We knew it'd be a hit for several reasons. What we learned this fall wasn't surprising, but we want to share with you our findings:

- After several presentations on the importance of inoculants, it surprised us how many questions arose on how long pre-inoculants survive on seed prior to planting. Remember, in many cases (aside from red clover and alfalfa), rhizobium that nodulate cover crop legumes are fragile and susceptible to desiccation.
- Depending on the strain, they won't survive on seed beyond 24 hours. In contrast, rhizobium that nodulate alfalfa can survive on seed 2+ years.

Beware of pre-inoculated cover crop seed. In most cases, there won't be any surviving rhizobia.

- Anytime you work with dry peat products you may run across a challenge or two at planting, largely due to moisture in planting equipment (humidity, dew, etc.). We didn't uncover any issues with this, largely because LINK™ has a low use rate. It's important to state again the correct procedure for mixing the product with seed:
- Mixing LINK™ and the seed thoroughly is important and even layering the seed and inoculant can improve this more. We also saw that slurry mixing worked especially well, but planting needs to commence as soon as the "coated" seed is dry.



Other Points to Keep in Mind:

- Each legume requires a certain strain to nodulate properly. For example, the strain that nodulates red clover will not nodulate crimson clover, and peas and vetches require their own specific strains. Likewise, any leftover soybean or alfalfa inoculant will not work with cover crops.
- LINK™ is designed to apply to the entire seed mix for ease of use and convenience. The advantage of applying inoculant to the entire mix is that the non-legume seed components “carry” inoculant into the soil, where the legume seeds are nearby. This provides more complete nodulation of the legume and enhanced nitrogen fixation than if the inoculant was applied only to the legume seed. Remember, inoculants are for the soil, not the seed!
- LINK™ is included with Soil First™ cover crop legume mix orders of 500 pounds or more and can also be purchased as a standalone product.
- LINK™ can be used effectively on over 50 legumes making it a convenient option for forage plantings too.

Other Frequently Asked Questions:

- **How long will LINK™ stay viable after it’s been applied to the seed?** *24 hours*
- **Is LINK™ a GMO product?** *No. There are no ingredients of LINK™ that would render it a GMO.*
- **Can I apply LINK™ at the same rate on straight legumes too, and are there enough rhizobium to handle a mono-culture legume seeding?** *Yes. With LINK’s high rhizobia counts there are sufficient numbers of rhizobia present to nodulate each straight legume on the label.*

For more information, please review the LINK Technical Sheet, or contact us to learn more.

About The Dirt

The Dirt is a periodic email series with timely cover crop tips from the agronomic experts at Soil First and La Crosse Seed. If you have a question you’d like us to answer, contact us: info@laxseed.com or 800.356.7333

