

# On-farm research in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

By Dr. David Patriquin,

The Nova-Scotian chapter of REAP formed in February '89 set up several experiments during the summer including trials of cover crops in spring cereals (crimson and red clover; hairy vetch and Nitro alfalfa), seeding pastures with Sonja clover, intersowing rye in June sown kale, and test plantings of fababeans and lupine. A field day was held on August 7th. Crimson clover and vetch performed well; Farmer David Firth also tried Common vetch which looks even better than Hairy vetch. It is too early to comment on other results.

Several farmers from the Nova Scotia group and Roger Samson attended the August 5th field day of the National Farmers Union's Ecological Agriculture Research Project in P.E.I. The project involves twelve island farmers who have been holding regular meetings over the past year to discuss ecological farming techniques. Two of the farms are now organic; others are conventional but with reduced inputs or include some experimental organic fields. I got involved in the project in January. We put together a research program and obtained some financial support for it from the P.E.I. Dept. of Agriculture.

This year's experiments included trials of cover crops as in Nova Scotia, tests of local "organo-fertilizers" (crab meal, fish scale and farm compost) and several experiments with fababeans and lupins. The fababeans were impressive and it was noticed that crimson clover looked especially good in these sandy soils. REAP contributed seed for the cover crop experiments and Roger Samson spent several days helping us prepare for the field day and discussing Resource Efficient Agriculture with the farmers.

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