

Cover Crops

Funding Opportunities to Try Them

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- NRCS program
- First time producers and / or land where cover crops haven't been planted before.
- Up to 3 annual payments---allows for cover crops to be tried for up to 3 years, but could be for 1 or 2 years if producer prefers.
- Payments based on seed mixture used
- Must meet NRCS Cover Crop standard seeding requirements
- Applications compete – highest environmental benefits get approved

2012—Payment Rates (flat rates)

Legumes--\$38.76 per acre
Winter Kill Species--\$29.98 per acre
Grasses / Cereal Grains--\$35.46 per acre
Species Mix-- \$42.46 per acre

Legumes: the use of legumes as cover crops to improve soil quality, decrease erosion, and provide nitrogen for subsequent crops. Legume species may be perennial or annual.

Winter Kill Species: The use of species that will be planted early enough to ensure adequate growth prior to a killing frost. The species will be planted to provide erosion control, capture excess nutrients, and improve soil condition. Species such as forage radishes and oats will meet the intent of this scenario.

Grasses / Cereal Grains: The use of species that will be planted early enough to ensure adequate growth prior to a killing frost. The species will be planted to provide erosion control, capture excess nutrients, and improve soil condition. Species such as winter cereals and annual ryegrass will meet the intent of the scenario.

Species Mix: The use of species to achieve multiple benefits. The mixtures may include annual, perennials, or mixtures of each. Additionally the mixtures may include winter killed species grown in combination with non-winter killed species.

Conservation Stewardship Program (NRCS)

- 5 year contract with annual payments
- Conservation benefits of farmer's current system + benefits of enhancements selected
- Maximum payment--\$40,000 per year per person
- Enhancements for cover crops
 1. Continuous Cover Crops
 2. Use of Cover Crop Mixtures
 3. Use of Deep-Rooted Cover Crops to Break Up Soil Compaction
 4. Plant a Cover Crop to Scavenge Residual Nitrogen

Farmers choose # of acres to plant cover crops on during the 5 years of the contract

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Conservation Practices Program (through Soil & Water Conservation Districts)

- 60% cost-share for seed and seeding / planting costs
- Maximum payment of \$40 per acre
- Maximum payment of \$1600 per producer
- 3 year eligibility for payments as long as there's funding

Allows a maximum of 40 acres to be done at a cost of \$66.66 per acre = \$1600

Visit your local USDA--Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation District office—the staff will help you decide which program will work best for you.

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