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Conservation Service

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Cover Crop Mix, Seed Cost, and Seeding Rate Calculator for the Mid-South



Fig. 1. "Mississippi Mix" cover crop mix in spring.

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Purpose: The purpose of this technical note is to provide NRCS field offices and the public a tool to estimate seed costs and seeding rates for both recommended and custom cover crop mixes in the mid-south.

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Cover Crop Mix, Seed Cost, and Seeding Rate Calculator for the Mid-South

The purpose of this document is to give NRCS field staff and producers a tool that will allow them to estimate seed cost(s) and seeding rate(s) for both recommended and custom cover crop mixes. This document should be used in conjunction with the Cover Crop Decision Tool (see your state eFOTG under 340-Cover Crop). Seed cost and seeding rate changes will be updated yearly. The file for this excel tool can be found by clicking on the link below, or by going to the FOTG for Mississippi and open the file with the file name “340 MS OTH Cover Crop Calculator Final 2021”.

<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/30421/>

There will be a popup asking to open the document as a ready-only click “Yes”. It is recommended that this file be downloaded as a copy. To download a copy, go to the tab labeled “File” then “Save As” click “Browse” select “Desktop” and click “Save”. The file will be saved to the desktop as “Copy of 340 MS OTH Cover Crop Calculator Final 2021”. Once this file has opened, verify you are using the newest version of this document. To do so, go to the first tab labeled “1. Introduction” at the top of the page there are cells labeled “Date Published:” and “Updated Last On:”. Year of update should correspond to year of use.

The following instructions are duplicated in this first tab of the document (please read through the tab before proceeding). All available species can be found in the tab labeled "2. Seed Prices". Additional information for each species in this tab includes: Seed Cost (\$/lbs.), Season, Group, Host for Root Knot Nematode (RKN), CSP Enhancement # and code(s), Planting Date, Seeding Rate (Broadcast and Drill), Recommended Varieties, and Aerial Broadcast. If a producer provides seed cost (\$/lbs.) for a particular species that differ from one in this document edits can be made to column labeled “Seed Cost (\$/lbs.)”. However, you will need to unlock this page. To do this, go to “Review” click on “Unprotect worksheet” and enter the password “mississippi”. NOTE: These changes will carry throughout the entire document affecting the cost of the mixes and custom calculator.

In the tab labeled "3a. Broadcast Mixes", you can find eight recommended and pre-calculated cover crop mixes for fall broadcast planting. Likewise, in the tab labeled "3b. Drill Mixes", you can find the exact same eight recommended and pre-calculated cover crop mixes for fall planting with a grain drill.

If you would prefer to calculate a custom mix, you can access either tab "4a. Broadcast Calculator" or "4b. Drill Calculator". Please follow the instructions below to use these calculators:

1. Fill out the column labeled "Species". This can be done by selecting the species of cover crop that you want to use from the drop-down list.
2. Fill out the column labeled "Percentage of Mix". This can be done by entering the percentage of the mix that you want the selected species to occupy. For monoculture, type 100 in the column. For mixes, you will need to make sure that all the species combined do not exceed 100%.
3. All the other cells in the calculator auto fill with information related to the mix. Important information such as seeding rate and seed costs for each species can be found in the row corresponding to the species.
4. In the summary table below the calculator, you will see the total percentage (should equal 100%), seeding rate (lbs./acre), and cost (\$/acre) of the cover crop mix.