

Count on us for grants to plant...

COVER CROPS

Maryland's 2020-2021 Cover Crop Sign-up

Mail-In Registration Runs July 1 - July 17, 2020



MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY COST-SHARE PROGRAM

COUNT ON MACS

Maryland farmers can count on MACS for grants to plant cover crops this fall to build healthy soils and protect the Chesapeake Bay. It's easy to understand why cover crops are so popular. Cover crops recycle nitrogen, reduce erosion, add valuable organic matter to the soil, and help protect fields from too much or too little rain. Thinking about adding cover crops to your planting rotation this year? Count on MACS to help you make it happen.

GRANTS TO PLANT COVER CROPS

The Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program provides grants to help farmers offset seed, labor, and equipment costs to plant cover crops in their fields following the harvest of summer crops. Our grants can make planting cover crops on your fields this fall affordable.

MAIL-IN ENROLLMENT

- To ensure everyone's safety, *this year's sign-up will be conducted by mail*. There is no need for farmers to sign up in person at local soil conservation district offices.
- Farmers who participated in last year's cover crop program were *mailed applications, instructions and a return envelope*.
- Applications, instructions and soil conservation district mailing addresses will be available at mda.maryland.gov beginning July 1, 2020.
- Completed applications must be mailed to the local soil conservation district and postmarked between July 1, 2020 and July 17, 2020.

2020 OVERVIEW AND INCENTIVE OPTIONS

- The 2020-2021 Cover Crop Program has been simplified and aligned with budget projections.
- The base payment for incorporated seed is \$40/acre. The base rate for aerial/aerial ground seeding is \$45/acre.
- Incorporated seed qualifies for a \$10/acre early planting incentive.
- Farmers who aerial seed or aerial ground seed cover crops into standing corn on or before September 10, 2020 qualify for a \$10/acre incentive payment.
- Farmers who terminate cover crops after May 1, 2021 may be eligible for an Extended Season incentive payment of up to \$10/acre, contingent on available funds. A determination will be made in February 2021.
- Incentive payments to plant rye are not offered this year.
- Plant cover crops after corn, soybeans, sorghum, tobacco, vegetables—and *new this year, hemp and millet*.
- There is a five acre minimum. The total number of acres enrolled may not exceed acreage managed under the farm's current Nutrient Management Plan.
- Direct deposit of cost-share grants is available.

SEED REQUIREMENTS

- All seed purchased must be tested and labeled following Maryland Seed Law and Regulations.
- Purchased seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seeds, have a minimum germination rate of 80%, and have no more than 16 restricted noxious weeds per pound.
- Homegrown seed with a germination rate between 65% and 79% may be used. Certain rules apply.
- Cost-share is available for seed testing.

2020-2021 COVER CROP PLANTING AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

TRADITIONAL COVER CROP PAYMENT OPTIONS	NO-TILL	CONVENTIONAL	BROADCAST WITH LIGHT, MINIMUM OR VERTICAL TILLAGE	AERIAL/AERIAL GROUND SEEDING	BROADCAST STALK CHOP AND BROADCAST CULTIPACKER
Base Payment	\$40/acre	\$40/acre	\$40/acre	\$45/acre	\$40/acre
Plant by October 10, add:	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre
Aerial seed into standing corn on or before September 10, add:	\$0/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre	\$10/acre	\$0/acre
Terminate cover crop after May 1, (contingent on available funding) add:	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre
MAXIMUM PAYMENT AMOUNT:	\$60/acre	\$60/acre	\$60/acre	\$65/acre	\$50/acre

ELIGIBLE COVER CROP SPECIES

- **Cereal Grains** *Wheat/spelt, rye, barley, triticale, oats and ryegrass*
- **Brassicas** *Forage radish and canola/rape*
- **Legumes** *Clover, Austrian winter peas and hairy vetch (must be planted with a cereal grain as part of a mix)*

COVER CROP MIXES

- Two-species cover crop mixes may be planted at a rate of 50 percent cereal grains and 50 percent brassicas or legumes.
- Three species mixes (50/25/25) must contain a minimum of 50 percent eligible cereal grains.

COVER CROP PLANTING/TERMINATION DATES

- Plant cereal grains by November 5, 2020. Some species have earlier deadlines. *(See chart below)*
- Mixes containing legumes, forage radish, canola/rape, or oats must be planted by October 1, 2020.
- The aerial seeding deadline for cover crops is October 10, 2020. Some species have earlier deadlines. *(See chart below)*
- Terminate cover crops between March 1 and June 1, 2021.

FALL MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Eligible cover crops may be grazed or chopped for on-farm live-stock forage after becoming well established. Manure may be applied in fall following Maryland's nutrient management regulations.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

To receive payment, farmers must certify cover crops with their soil conservation district within one week of planting and no later than November 13, 2020.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must be in good standing with MACS and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management requirements.
- A Current Nutrient Management Plan Certification is required and must be submitted with the application. Additional restrictions may apply.

FIND A COVER CROP CONTRACTOR

Visit mda.maryland.gov for a list of contractors who can plant cover crops in your fields this fall.



**Maryland
Department of Agriculture**

Office of Resource Conservation

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2020-2021 COVER CROP SEEDING RATES AND PLANTING DEADLINES

COVER CROP	SEEDING RATE PER ACRE/POUNDS		BASE PAYMENT FOR TRADITIONAL COVER CROP ONLY	STATEWIDE PLANTING PERIOD FOR TRADITIONAL COVER CROP PROGRAM ¹	AERIAL PLANTING DEADLINES	BROADCAST STALK CHOP AND BROADCAST CULTIPACKER
	AERIAL ³ BROADCAST STALK CHOP BROADCAST CULTIPACKER	INCORPORATED ⁴				
Canola/Rape	10	6	\$25 ²	8/15-10/01	10/01	10/01
Forage Radish	12.5	7.5	\$40	8/15-10/01	10/01	10/01
Oats	120	72	\$40	8/15-10/01	10/01	10/01
Barley	150	90	\$40	8/15-10/15	10/10	10/15
Rye	140	84	\$40	8/15-11/05	10/10	10/15
Triticale	140	84	\$40	8/15-11/05	10/10	10/15
Wheat/Spelt	150	90	\$40	8/15-11/05	10/10	10/15
Ryegrass	25	15	\$40	8/15-10/15	10/10	10/15
MUST BE PLANTED AS PART OF A CEREAL GRAIN MIX						
Clover	25	15	\$40	8/15-10/01	10/01	10/01
Hairy Vetch	31.25	20	\$40	8/15-10/01	10/01	10/01
Winter Peas	75	45	\$40	8/15-10/01	10/01	10/01

¹Seeding may begin on 08/15/2020 for all planting options.

²The base payment for planting canola/rape as a single species is \$25/acre. No reduction in payment when planted as part of a mix.

³The seeding rate for aerial and non-incorporated planting methods is increased by 25%.

⁴The seeding rate for incorporated planting methods is 25% less than in previous years.

The 2020-2021 Cover Crop Program is administered by the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program and funded by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund.