

COVER YOUR BASES

Plant Cover Crops

Maryland's 2022-2023 Cover Crop Sign-up

SAVE THE DATE!

This year's cover crop sign-up runs from **July 1 through July 18, 2022**. This is your opportunity to apply for grants to help pay for seed, labor, and equipment costs to plant cover crops in your fields this fall.

WHY COVER CROPS?

Cover crops are your first line of defense against erosion and runoff in winter. Want to improve your soil's health? Check out this triple play of benefits:

- Cover crops add organic matter to the soil
- Cover crops help suppress weeds and reduce soil compaction
- Cover crops protect fields from too much or too little rain

MAIL-IN ENROLLMENT

- This year's enrollment will be conducted entirely by mail.
- Please complete the enclosed application and mail it to your local soil conservation district using the envelope provided. Applications must be post-marked between **July 1, 2022 and July 18, 2022**.

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR...

- The base rate for incorporated seed has been raised to \$55/acre.
- The incentive payment to plant rye and mixed species has increased to \$15/acre.

ADDITIONAL 2022-2023 COVER CROP PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Incorporated seed qualifies for a \$10/acre early planting incentive.

INTRODUCING

COVER CROP **plus**

Our new COVER CROP *PLUS+* option offers higher incentive payments and more perks for farmers who sign a 3-year cover crop commitment. Contact your soil conservation district for details or visit mda.maryland.gov/conservation.

- Aerial seed or aerial ground seed cover crops into standing corn on or before September 10, 2022 to qualify for a \$10/acre incentive payment.
- Terminate your cover crop after May 1, 2023 to qualify for a \$10/acre Extended Season incentive payment.
- Plant rye or multi-species cover crops for a \$15/acre incentive payment.
- Plant cover crops after corn, soybeans, sorghum, tobacco, vegetables, hemp and millet.
- There is a five acre minimum. The total number of acres enrolled may not exceed acreage managed under your 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.

Please turn over

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% cereal grains and 50% brassicas or legumes.
- Three species mixes (50/25/25) must contain a minimum of 50% eligible cereal grains.

2022-2023 COVER CROP PLANTING AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

TRADITIONAL COVER CROPS PAYMENT OPTIONS	NO-TILL	CONVENTIONAL	BROADCAST WITH LIGHT, MINIMUM OR VERTICAL TILLAGE	AERIAL/ AERIAL GROUND SEEDING	BROADCAST STALK CHOP AND BROADCAST CULTIPACKER
Base payment:	\$55/acre	\$55/acre	\$55/acre	\$60/acre	\$55/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
Plant rye or a multi-species cover crop, add:	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre
Terminate cover crop after May 1, add:	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre	\$10/acre
Maximum Payment Amount:	\$90/acre	\$90/acre	\$90/acre	\$95/acre	\$80/acre
Flat rate: (for cover crops planted from November 6 through November 15)	\$45/acre	\$45/acre	\$45/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre

PLANTING/TERMINATION DATES AND LATE PLANTING EXTENSIONS

- Plant cereal grains by November 5, 2022. Some species have earlier deadlines.
- Mixes containing legumes, forage radish, canola/rape, or oats must be planted by October 1, 2022.
- The aerial seeding deadline for cover crops is October 10, 2022. Some species have earlier deadlines.
- Terminate cover crops between March 1 and June 1, 2023.
- Cover crops planted from November 6 through November 15 qualify for a reduced flat rate. Seed must be incorporated, the rye incentive is available, and termination must take place after May 1.

FALL MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

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

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

To receive payment, certify cover crops with your local soil conservation district within one week of planting and no later than November 14, 2022. Late season

cover crops planted from November 6 through November 15 must be certified by November 22, 2022.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- You must be in good standing with the Conservation Grants Program and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management requirements.
- You must submit a current Nutrient Management Plan Certification with your application.
- Additional restrictions may apply.

FIND A CONTRACTOR TO PLANT YOUR COVER CROP

For a list of contractors who can plant cover crops in your fields this fall, visit mda.maryland.gov/conservation.



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