Congratulations on your decision to grow cover crops this fall. The Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program welcomes you as one of nearly 2,000 cover crop farmers who are working to protect local water quality, reduce soil erosion and increase the productivity of their crop fields. Last year, Maryland farmers planted more than 475,000 acres of cover crops. It was the largest cover crop planting in Maryland history. This year, we are hoping to build on that success.

It’s time to begin planning your cover crop program. Please take a moment to review the planting information and payment schedule so that you’ll be ready for the fall planting season.

New this year, cover crop mixes containing crimson clover, Austrian winter peas or hairy vetch may be mixed with cereal grains to create diversity. The seeding rate is 60 percent cereal grains and 40 percent legumes or radish. The species with the earliest planting date determines the planting deadline. Mixes containing rye do not qualify for the $10/acre rye incentive.

Maryland’s 2015-2016 Cover Crop Program is funded by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Chesapeake Bay 2010 Trust Fund.