



Do You Have Problems With:

- Crusting soils
- Crop moisture stress
- Soil erosion
- Cloddy soils
- Fertilizer costs
- Weeds

Cover crops can help.

Cover crops include planting and growing grasses, legumes, or combinations of grasses and legumes as cover between production crops.



Corn showing moisture stress. Cover crops can store soil moisture for crops.

Benefits of Cover Crops:

- Reduce erosion from wind and water.
- Increase soil organic matter content.
- Improve soil tilth/workability.
- Store nutrients in the root zone.
- Promote biological nitrogen fixation.
- Weed suppression.
- Take up excess soil moisture while growing.
- Save soil moisture when used as a mulch.
- Provide supplemental forage.
- Improve crop yields.



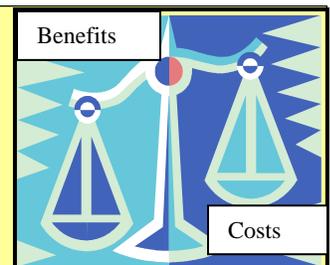
Oats Cover Crop

Cost to establish the cover crop:

- Seed cost can vary from about \$2 per acre for oats to \$15-\$25 per acre for some of the legumes.
- If cover crops are established using no-till methods, there is no cost for seedbed preparation.
- Seeding can be as inexpensive as broadcast seeding or using a no-till drill.

Cover crop benefits:

- \$20-\$40 dollar nitrogen credit for legume cover crops



Cover crop benefits

Cover Crops

Cover crop establishment, types, uses, and management:



Cover crops can be seeded directly into crop residue.



Brassicas, such as Rape or Forage Turnip provide winter cover and forage for livestock and wildlife.



A ryegrass, wheat or cereal rye cover crop can be broadcast seeded into soybean stubble after harvest.



Legumes such as Austrian Winter Pea provide both cover and nitrogen for the next crop.



An oats cover crop provides wind erosion protection until crop is established.



Annual Ryegrass can be broadcast seeded after manure application to prevent nutrient loss.

Cover Crops

Cover crop establishment, types, uses, and management (Continued):



Cereal Rye cover rolled down to be killed. No disking or herbicides needed.



The next crop (soybeans) drilled directly into the rolled rye cover crop. The rye cover dies after rolling.



A specially designed roller crimps the rye stem and lays it flat. The next crop is no-tilled into the cover. The mulch provides erosion control, weed control, soil moisture for the next crop, and enhanced soil quality.



Soybeans that were planted directly into the rolled rye cover have outstanding weed control with little or no herbicides used.



Cover crops can also be tilled into the soil. This is used when tillage is needed prior to planting.



The proper use of cover crops requires planning to select the right cover crop for the desired purpose.

SMALL SCALE SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR FARM IN INDIANA

Technical Help Is Available

Your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists that can assist you with planning and designing Cover Crops into your operation. They can also help you develop a Conservation Plan to solve other concerns you have identified on your farm.

There is no charge for our assistance. Simply call your local office to set up an appointment and we will come to your farm. Requests for our assistance are numerous, but we will assist you as quickly as we can.

You may also be eligible to receive financial assistance through a state or federal program. Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so you can make the best decision for your operation. All NRCS programs and services are voluntary.



Helping People Help the Land

For More Information Contact the:

Natural Resources Conservation Service at the USDA Service Center for your county

On the web at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Or

Located in the phone book under 'United States Government, United States Department of Agriculture, USDA Service Centers'

Or the

Local Soil & Water Conservation District

(Typically co-located in the local USDA Service Center)

Office hours: M-F, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (closed on federal holidays)

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