

### Pick the Right Cover Crops

There are no universal cover crop solutions, but there are geographically-sensitive tools to help. Select the tool that supports your region.

#### Midwest Cover Crop Council's Cover Crop Decision Tools

[mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/VertIndex.php](http://mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/VertIndex.php)

- ✓ Supports: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Ontario, Wisconsin

#### Cornell's Cover Crop Decision Tool

[covercrops.cals.cornell.edu/decision-tool.php](http://covercrops.cals.cornell.edu/decision-tool.php)

- ✓ Supports: New York and adjacent states

#### Innovations in Cover Crops Decision Tool

[decision-tool.incovercrops.ca/](http://decision-tool.incovercrops.ca/)

- ✓ Supports: Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Québec

### Read About Selected Cover Crops

Use these resources to learn more about each variety.

#### USDA Agricultural Research Service's Cover Crop Chart

[ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=20323](http://ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=20323)

Designed after the periodic table, this interactive PDF provides quick information on 58 crop species that may be planted individually or in cocktail mixtures. Great for comparing varieties and their different uses. Primary sources of information included the Midwest Cover Crops Council, USDA-SARE, USDA-NRCS PLANTS database, and relevant peer-reviewed journal articles.

#### Sustainable Ag Research & Education Program's (SAREP) Cover Crop Variety Reference

[sarep.ucdavis.edu/database/covercrops](http://sarep.ucdavis.edu/database/covercrops)

SAREP created a browsable online reference based on peer-reviewed articles for cover crop varieties

## Financial Tools for Cover Crops

Do cover crops pay off? Use one of the tools and programs below to see what the financials look like.

### Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Cover Crops Economics Tool

[nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/il/soils/health](https://nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/il/soils/health)

Two economists at NRCS built an incredibly thorough and research-based Microsoft Excel tool to help with cost-benefit modeling for cover crops. Use this if you are interested to see how cover crops pay off in the short-term and long-term. Find it and a video demo on how to use it on the website.

### Iowa Learning Farms Cover Crop Cost Calculator

[extension.iastate.edu/ilf/content/cover-crop-resources](https://extension.iastate.edu/ilf/content/cover-crop-resources)

Iowa State Iowa Learning Farms created a tool to help calculate and compare the cost of drilling vs. aerial seeding cover crops. This downloadable Excel file calculates the total cost of implementing cover crops, including cost of seeds, application and chemical termination.

## Financial Assistance Programs

### Contact Your Local NRCS Office

[offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs](https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs)

Use the link above to find contact information for your local NRCS office. Contact them to see what financial assistance options are available in your area. You can also read about these NRCS conservation programs:

- [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#) helps landowners and farmers maintain and improve existing conservation systems, and adopt additional resource management practices. Participants earn payments for conservation performance - the higher the performance, the higher the payment.
- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers through contracts up to ten years in length. Support is available for nutrient management, grassed waterways, buffer and filter strips, streambank restoration and more.

## **Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

Check out these great resources on best management practices for different topics within cover crops.

### **Managing Cover Crops Profitably**

[sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Managing-Cover-Crops-Profitably-3rd-Edition](http://sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Managing-Cover-Crops-Profitably-3rd-Edition)

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education's excellent book, available for free download, "explores how and why cover crops work, and provides all the information needed to build cover crops into any farming operation. Along with detailed management information on the most commonly used species—including grasses, grains, brassicas and mustards, and legumes—Managing Cover Crops Profitably offers chapters on the role of cover crops in broader topics such as crop rotations, pests and conservation tillage."

### **NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines**

[nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1263099.pdf](http://nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1263099.pdf)

Guide to terminating cover crops based on geographic region in the U.S.

### **Using Winter Cover Crops to Improve Soil and Water Quality**

[ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/60100500/csr/ResearchPubs/reeves/reeves\\_01b.pdf](http://ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/60100500/csr/ResearchPubs/reeves/reeves_01b.pdf)

Dabney, Delgado and Reeves (2001) provide an immense, in-depth literature review, research and special considerations on BMPs for cover crops.

### **Managing Spring Cover Crops for Feed**

[ocj.com/2015/04/managing-spring-cover-crops-for-feed/](http://ocj.com/2015/04/managing-spring-cover-crops-for-feed/)

Guide to using cover crops for feed. Double check crop insurance restrictions for your state before using cover crops for feed.