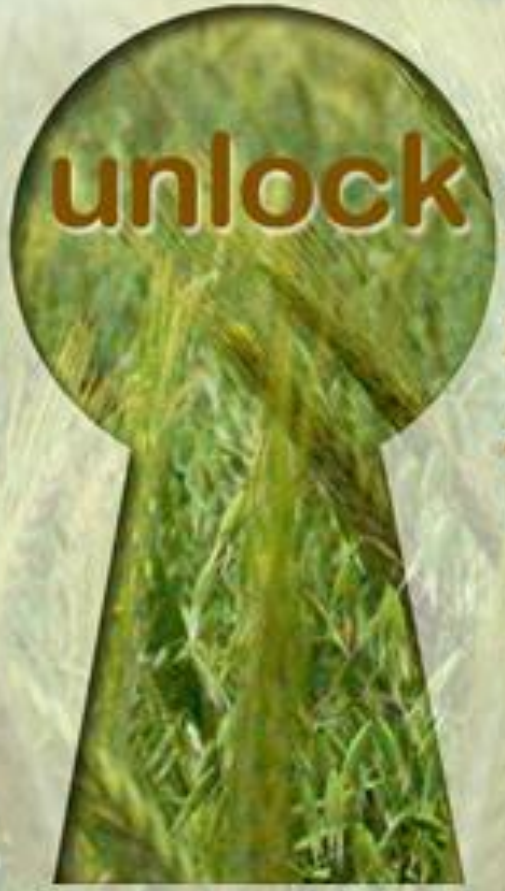
NRCS Programs

Carissa Spencer
MN NRCS State Agronomist

USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



unlock your farm's potential

discover the cover

Cover Crops:

- Restore Soil Health
- Protect Natural Resources
- Provide Wildlife Habitat
- Feed Livestock

unlock the SECRETS OF THE SOIL

Contact your local NRCS office to learn more about the technical and financial assistance available.

Equal opportunity provider and employer.

What are cover crops, and why have they become so popular?

What are cover crops?

- Crops including grasses, legumes, forbs, or other herbaceous plants established for seasonal cover and conservation purposes

Cover Crop Species

Legumes	Clover legumes	Grasses	Brassicas	Broadleaf
• Hairy Vetch • Alfalfa • Field/Winter Pea • Cowpeas • Soybean	• Crimson • Red • Berseem • White • Sweet	• Spring/Winter Barley • Foxtail Millet • Japanese Millet • Pearl Millet • Proso Millet • Oats • Winter Cereal Rye • Annual Ryegrass • Sorghum-Sudangrass • Sudangrass • Winter Triticale • Spring/Winter Wheat	• Yellow Mustard • Radish (Oilseed or Forage) • Canola • Rapeseed • Turnip	• Flax • Buckwheat

Environmental Qualities Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive **financial** and **technical** help install conservation practices on agricultural land to solve a resource concern.

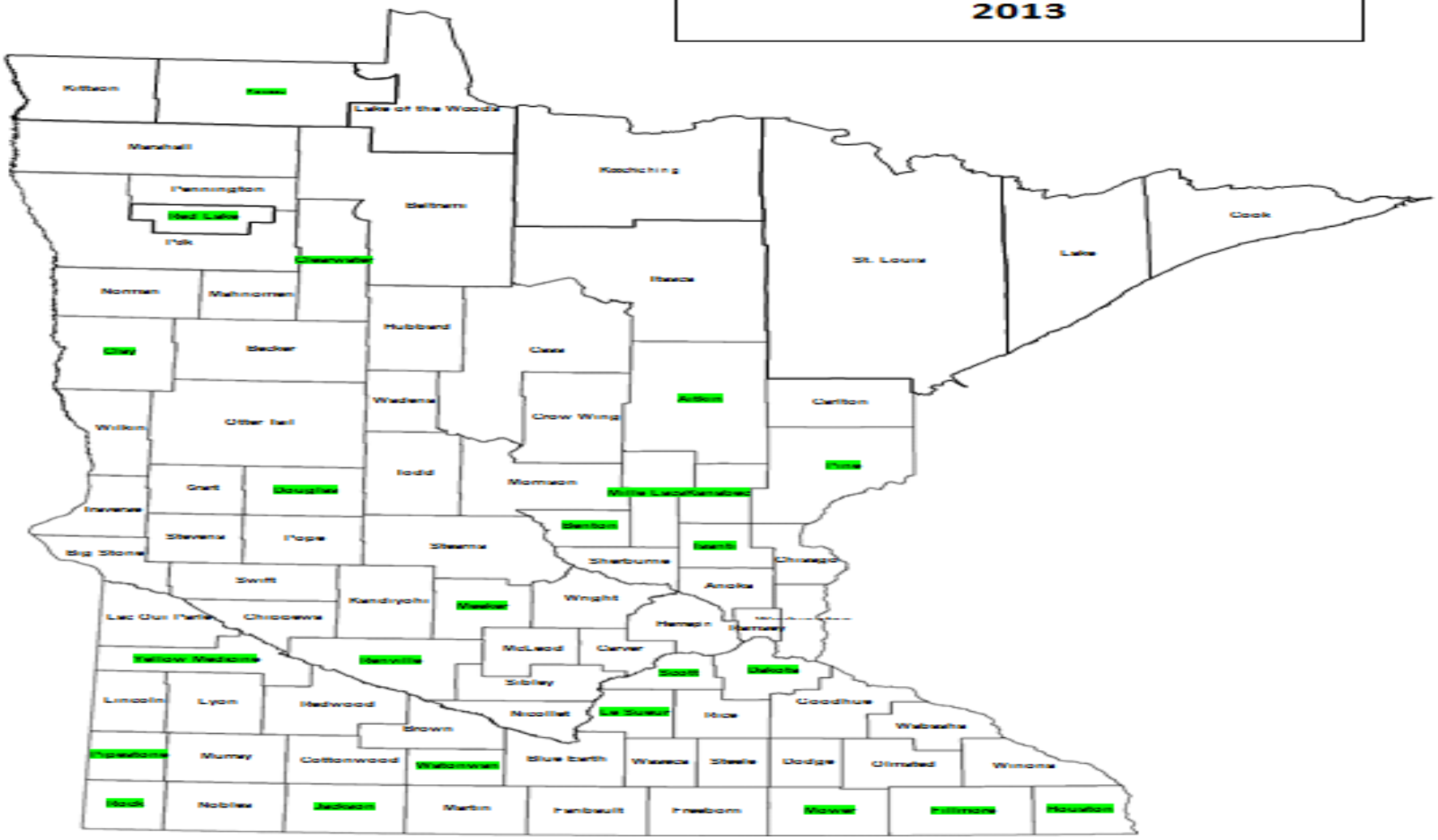
Cover Crops (340)

- Soil Health Cover Crop Initiative
  - 5 year contract on same acres
  - Multi-species mixture
  - Capped at $4000.00

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

unlock the SECRETS IN THE SOIL

Cover Crop Soil Health Initiative 2013



- **Other EQIP Cover Crop Scenarios**
  - One Species
  - One Species Wind Erosion
  - Grass and Legume (2 species)
  - 3 Species
  - Organic

- **Cover Crops are available in General EQIP and Ag Certainty along with several other initiatives :**
  - Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative (DALCI)
  - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)
  - Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)
  - National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
  - Organic Initiative (OI)
  - Prairie Pothole Wetland and Grassland Retention Project (PPWGRP)
  - Honey Bee Pollinator (HBP) Effort

- EQIP 2014
  - Under 2014 Farm Bill Guidance
    - Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) now part of EQIP
  - Continuous application period

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Minnesota
United States Department of Agriculture

About Us | National Centers | State Offices

Topics | Programs | Newsroom | Contact Us

Browse By Audience | A-Z Index | Advanced Search | Help

USDA to invest in Prairie Pothole landscape effort

By restoring wetlands and grasslands, farmers and ranchers are protecting lands that are critical to holding water and providing wildlife habitat

4 / 5

Popular Topics

- Financial Assistance
- Soils
- Technical Service Provider
- State Technical Committee

Sign up for email updates: Go

In the News | **Events & Deadlines**

- Agriculture Secretary Announces $3 Million for a New Program to Improve Pollinator Health
- USDA to Invest $35M in Prairie Pothole Conservation Efforts
- NRCS and U.S. Forest Service Partner Improve Forest Health
- Cover Crops Forums to Explore Soil-Health-Building Opportunites

Quick Links

Minnesota Directory
Ag Certainty (MAWQCP)
Field Office Technical Guide
Local Workgroup Meeting Schedules
Employment
Civil Rights

2014 Farm Bill

Soil Health

Programs

- Farm Bill
- ⊟ Financial Assistance
  - Agricultural Management Assistance
  - Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
  - Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative
  - Conservation Innovation Grants
  - Conservation Stewardship Program
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
  - Emergency Watershed Protection Program
  - Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
- ⊞ Easements
- Landscape Initiatives
- ⊞ Landscape Planning

Financial Assistance

Sign up for E-mail updates on Financial Assistance Programs

Introduction

NRCS's natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and scenic beauty.

Is a conservation plan right for you?

NRCS assists landowners and land users, communities, units of state and local government, Tribes, and other Federal agencies in planning and implementing conservation systems and practices.

The first step in seeking NRCS assistance is to call your local **USDA Service Center** and make an appointment with NRCS staff that will help you identify the natural resource problems and opportunities on your farm, define your conservation objectives, and inventory your soil, water, air, plant and animal resources. Much of this information will require a field visit to see your operation and to evaluate the resource concerns you may have. You can work with NRCS to develop a conservation plan. Financial assistance from NRCS farm bill programs or other Federal, State and local conservation programs may be available to help fund some of the conservation practices outlined in your plan.

See links below for detailed information on financial assistance programs Minnesota NRCS has to offer.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)

The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Through CSP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides technical and financial help to landowners for conservation practices that protect soil and water quality. Grassed waterways, steam fencing, critical area planting, terraces, manure management systems including storage structures and barnyard runoff protection, and many other conservation practices are eligible for EQIP.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- Encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining and managing existing activities.
  - http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mn/programs/financial/?cid=nrcs142p2_023501

CSP Enhancements

- WQL 10 Plant cover crops that will scavenge residual nitrogen
- ENR12 Use of legume cover crop as a nitrogen source
- SQL02 Continuous cover crops
- SQL04 Use of cover crop mixes
- SQL05 Use of deep rooted crops to break up soil compaction
- FPP02 On Farm Pilot Project (Manure Slurry Seeding of Cover Crops)

Good Cover Crop Resources

- Managing Cover Crops Profitably 3rd Edition
  http://www.sare.org/
- Midwest Cover Crop Council
  http://www.mccc.msu.edu/
- Practical Farmers of Iowa
  http://practicalfarmers.org
- Accumulation of Articles
  http://plantcovercrops.com/
- Detailed species information
  http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/database/covercrops

Midwest Cover Crop Decision Tool

Midwest Cover Crop Council
http://mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/VertIndex.php

Midwest Cover Crops Council - Cover Crop Decision Tool

Minnesota: Stearns County Seeding Dates

Location Information | Cash Crop Information | Soil Information | Attribute Information

Location Information Minnesota | Stearns

Cash Crop None or Prevented Planting **Plant Date:** **Harvest Date:**

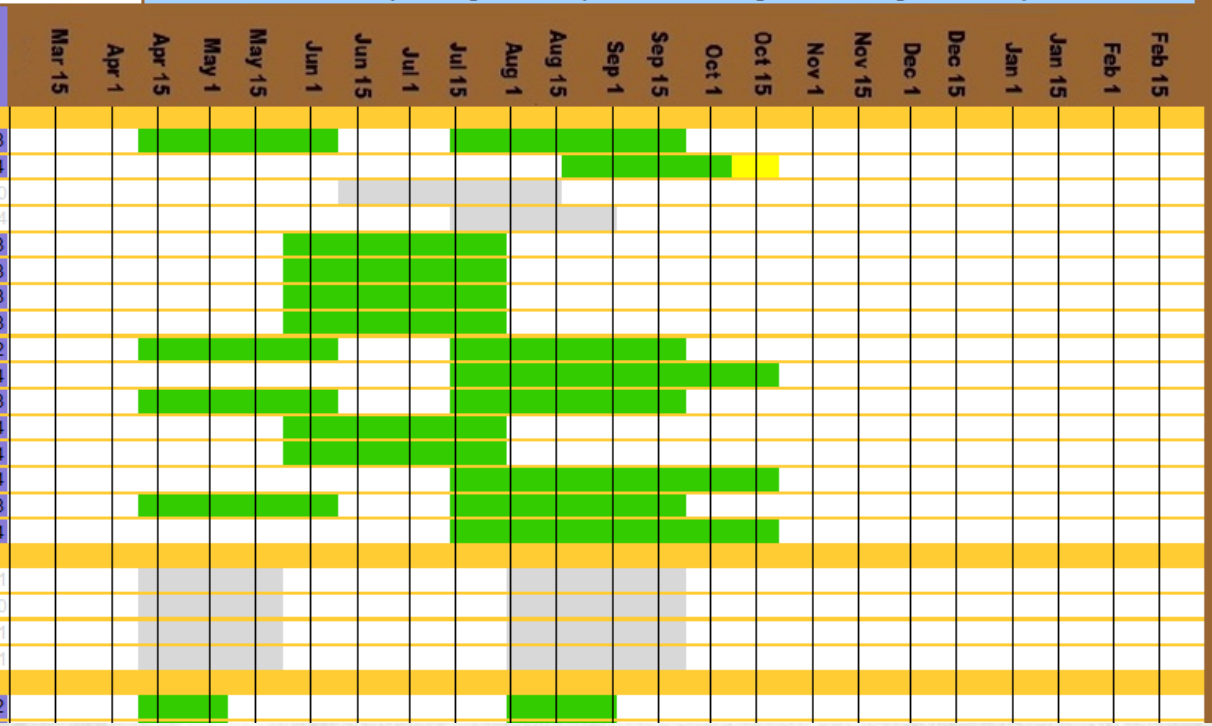
Drainage Information Select a Drainage Class **Flooding** No

Goal #1 Soil Builder **Goal #2** Erosion Fighter **Goal #3** Lasting Residue

Select cover crop to create information sheet 50% HV/50% WC Rye Submit

Attribute Ratings: 0-Poor, 1-Fair	Reliable Establishment	Freeze Risk to Establishment	Frost Seeding
2-Good, 3-Very Good, 4-Excellent	Cash Crop Growing Period: Requires Aerial Seeding or Interseeding of Cover Crop		

	Lasting Residue	Erosion Fighter	Soil Builder
Nonlegumes			
Barley, Spring	3	3	3
Barley, Winter	3	4	4
Buckwheat	2	2	0
Flax	1	1	4
Millet, Foxtail	3	3	3
Millet, Japanese	3	3	3
Millet, Pearl	3	3	3
Millet, Proso	3	3	3
Oats	3	3	2
Rye, Winter Cereal	4	4	4
Ryegrass, Annual	3	3	3
Sorghum-sudangrass	4	3	4
Sudangrass	4	3	4
Triticale, Winter	3	4	4
Wheat, Spring	3	3	3
Wheat, Winter	3	4	4
Brassicas			
Mustard, Yellow	2	2	1
Radish, Oilseed	3	2	0
Rapeseed/Canola	2	2	1
Turnip, Forage type	2	2	1
Legumes			
Alfalfa - Dormant	3	4	2



Minnesota NRCS Website

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Minnesota
United States Department of Agriculture

About Us | National Cer

Topics | Programs | Newsroom | Contact Us

Browse By Audience | A-Z Index | Ad

You are Here: Home / Technical Resources / Cover Crops - Minnesota NRCS

Stay Connected

Technical Resources

- Conservation Planning
- Data, Maps, & Analysis
- Ecological Science Engineering
- Land Use
- State Technical Committee

Cover Crops - Minnesota NRCS

Updated 03/13/2014

Midwest Cover Crops Council
Midwest Cover Crops Council --Cover Crops Decision Tool (Introduction for the Tool)
Website for actual tool
Minnesota Department of Agriculture--Cover Crops
Research and Demonstration
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Cover Crops

These documents require Acrobat Reader.

- Carbon to Nitrogen Ratios in Cropping Systems (PDF; 203 KB)
- Cover Crop Characteristics (PDF; 18 KB)
- Cover Crop Chart (PDF; 6 MB)
- Cover Crop Fact Sheet (PDF; 175 KB)
- Cover Crop Fact Sheet Brochure (PDF; 163 KB)
- Cover Crop Fact Sheet Funding (PDF; 126 KB)
- Cover Crop Fact Sheet Resources (PDF; 106 KB)
- Cover Crop Fact Sheet Technical (PDF; 123 KB)
- Cover Crop on the Intensive Market Farm (PDF; 697 KB)
- Cover Crops to Improve Soil in Prevented Planting Fields (Fact Sheet) (PDF; 303 KB)
- Managing Cover Crops Profitably (PDF; 4.6 MB)
- Overview of Cover Crops and Green Manure (PDF; 484 KB)
- Stop Soil Erosion on Canning Crop Acres (PDF; 1 MB)

Thank you!
Questions?

Carissa Spencer

NRCS State Agronomist

651-602-7866

Carissa.Spencer@mn.usda.gov

NRCS Homepage:

http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/

An equal opportunity provider and employer.

unlock the SECRETS IN THE SOIL

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)
To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign, and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at www.ascr.usda.gov, or write to:

USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410
Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).