

DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District

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2025-2026 COVER CROP PROGRAM

Cost-share assistance is provided as an incentive to encourage the adoption of cover crops to prevent soil erosion, reduce water quality degradation, and improve soil health.

- Cooperators (landowner/operator) must have a farm number through the Farm Service Agency in order to be eligible to sign-up for state cost-share.
- Cooperators must have an approved conservation plan which includes the requested practice before the contract is approved.
- A cost-share contract must be board approved *before* the conservation practice is started.
- Operators may participate with authorization from landowner.
- Applies to acres where a production row crop is grown.
- Cover crops must be adopted in compliance with NRCS Cover Crop (340) Conservation Practice Standard.
- All cover crop seedings must be planned with a minimum of 25% cool-season annual grass, small grain component or warm-season grass.
- The first time a field is included on a state cost-share contract, a soil sample for the Initial Standard Soil Health Package through the Soil Health Assessment Center (SHAC) at the University of Missouri must be taken prior to seeding cover crops.
- Cover crops should be no-tilled or broadcast seeded with either ground or aerial equipment to get the full soil health benefits of using cover crops.
- Cover crops will not be harvested for grain, seed or hayed. *Previous drought variances that allowed harvesting cover crops for livestock feed ended on June 30, 2025.*
- Cover crops may be grazed once forages have reached a minimum height of 6–8 inches with enough biomass produced to justify grazing. However, grazing should not occur if it will damage forages so that their effectiveness as a cover crop would be impacted. Grazing will need to stop once the forages have been grazed down to 4 inches.
- Cover crops will be terminated as late as practical to maximize plant biomass production and nutrient uptake.
- Tillage cannot be used to terminate the cover crops.
- Production crop following the cover crops must be planted using a no-till system on the contracted acres.
- Payment can be issued after no-till planting of the production crop or after May 1st if the production crop has not yet been planted.

*1 or 2 species mix: \$30/acre
3 or more species mix: \$40/acre
Maximum annual payment:
\$5000 per cooperator*

Cooperators are encouraged to plan ahead and sign-up in the summer months whenever possible. Deadline to sign up is one week prior to the seeding deadline for your planned species:

SEPTEMBER 25TH

*Last day to plant
turnips, radishes,
spring oats*

*★ sign up by
September 18th*

OCTOBER 20TH

*Last day to plant
winter oats, clovers,
canola, hairy vetch*

*★ sign up by
October 10th*

DECEMBER 1ST

*Last day to plant
cereal rye, triticale,
wheat*

*★ sign up by
November 24th*