

Cover Crops

Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program (VACS)

Practice Requirements and Rates

SL-8H: Harvestable Small Grain

Cost-Share: \$20/Acre
Planting Date: October 20th
Farm Produced Manure Application Allowed
(Up to 300 acres, other restrictions apply)

SL-8B: Small Grain/Mixed for Nutrient Management:

Cost-Share: \$40/Acre
Pure Rye Stand: \$20/Acre
Early Planting Bonus: \$30/Acre
Early Planting Date: October 20th
Standard Planting Date: November 10th
No Manure Application Allowed

SL-8M: Small Grain/Mixed for Nutrient Management with Fall Manure Application:

Cost-Share: \$15/Acre
Pure Rye Stand: \$8/Acre
Early Planting Bonus: \$22/Acre
Early Planting Date: October 20th
Standard Planting Date: November 10th
Manure Application Allowed Prior to Planting
(if conditions are met)

SL-8: Protective Crop for Specialty Crops

Cost-Share: \$40/Acre
Planting Date: November 30th
Must be maintained for 90 days

WQ-4: Legume Based Cover Crop

Cost-Share: \$45/Acre
Planting Date:
Crimson Clover/Clover Mixtures: Sept 28th
Winter Pea or Hairy Vetch/Winter Pea or
Hairy Vetch Mixtures: Oct 26th

If you do not want to receive cost share for cover crop you can receive State tax credit at 25% of eligible out of pocket expenses. Tax credit amount cannot to exceed \$25,000.



What is a Cover Crop?

A cover crop is grown to protect and improve the soil in rotation with a cash crop, like corn or soybeans. This agronomic practice creates a protective cover for the soil during the fall and winter, reducing soil loss and erosion. Cover crops also provide a nutrient management benefit by helping reduce nutrient loss and leaching. Biomass from cover crop residue also improves soils structure and tilth.

Program Details

In the fall, participants must visit their local SWCD to sign up cover crop acreage. There are several options for cover crops, each practice has different seeding, planting date and kill-down/harvest date requirements. All cover crop practices are subject to spot check after planting to verify 60% ground cover. A good stand and growth of vegetated cover must be obtained by December 15th. Cost share payment, at a variable rate, will be provided once the practice is completed in the spring. A nutrient management plan (NMP) including all acres enrolled is required to receive cost share/tax credit. The State has certified planners to write NMPs at no charge to producers.

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District:

Lord Fairfax: 540-465-2424 ext. 5
(Clarke, Frederick, Warren, Shenandoah, City of Winchester)

Shenandoah Valley: 540-534-3105
(Rockingham, Page, City of Harrisonburg)

Headwaters: 540-248-0148
(Augusta, City of Staunton, City of Waynesboro)

