Boost your bottom line with Cover Crops

The benefit to your farm:

Your local Soil and Water Conservation District can help you qualify for funds that decrease the cost of planting cover crops on your farm, which can boost your bottom line by:

- Increasing moisture retention and drought resistance.
- Reducing soil erosion caused by wind and water.
- Improving soil structure and tilth.

Money comes from the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program, which is carried out by conservation districts and administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

How it works:

Planting a system of continuous, year-round cover reduces nonpoint source pollution by slowing runoff and taking up excess nitrogen that otherwise would leach into the water table. Cover crops also prevent soil erosion caused by wind and rain.

Choosing the right cover for your crop rotation is important. Planting early in the season generally produces the best economic and environmental results. No-till practices further enhance cover crop benefits by allowing biomass to accumulate and enrich the soil.

The payoff:

In State Program Year 2023, the Virginia Cost-Share reimbursement rate is **$40/acre** for small grain cover crop planted for nutrient and residue management. This is the most opular best management practice related to cover crops.

Participating farmers can qualify for an additional:

- **$30/acre for early planting**
- **$20/acre for rye cultivars**

These and three other cover crop cost-share rates change annually. Additional bottom-line benefits depend on the type of cover you plant and your soil conditions. District staff can help you identify the cover crop practice that best fits your operation.

Next steps:

Conservation begins with your local Soil and Water Conservation District, which can help you apply for many different cost-share funding programs to help you implement cover crop best management practices. District staff also can identify other conservation programs for which you might qualify.

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