

COVER CROP INCENTIVE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Perry County Conservation District seeks to promote the use of multi species cover crops to benefit soil health on Perry County farms. A tiered incentive payment as follows is being offered to support this goal; 5 species mix (\$70/acre), 3 species mix (\$50/acre) and a single species (\$30/acre).

- **Sign up deadline and program eligibility:**
 - Sign up deadline: applications must be in the office by July 12, 2024.
 - Applications need to be fully filled out and maps submitted to be considered complete.
 - Submission of Sign-up Form does not guarantee enrollment.
 - ***Grower will be notified when accepted into the program. Once enrollment is completed, we will notify the farmer of their eligibility status and how many acres will be eligible for incentive payment, these figures will be based on total program acres applied for and available grant funding.***
- **Incentive Payment Specifics**
 - Cover Crop Incentive Program is a one (1) year program.
 - Cover Crops must be terminated, cannot be harvested in any manner.
 - Cover Crops are not to be destroyed prior to April 1, 2025.
 - This program is open to all farmers in Perry County. Acreage limits will be at the discretion of the District and dependent upon applications received.
 - Operator must be in management control of the crop in order to qualify.
 - Incentive Funding will be paid at a rate of: \$70 per acre (A minimum of 5 species mix, planted between August 1 – September 15), \$50 per acre (A minimum of 3 species mix, planted between September 16 – October 30), \$30 per acre (at least 1 species, planted after August 1).
 - A maximum of 300 total acres may be applied for through this program.
 - Only approved winter cover crops are eligible. Alternative cover crops that are not pre-authorized will NOT be considered for incentive payment.
50% of total Cover Crop species mix cannot winter-kill, see Planting Timeline & Cover Crop Suggestion Table attached in the Application Form.
 - Any mix planted must adhere to a 45 lbs per acre seeding rate.
 - Proof for Certification, to be submitted by the Grower: 1) 3-5 digital photos showing growth (drill lines are acceptable for late plantings), 2) Proof of seed receipt and seed tags, 3) Acres where planted field map (if acreage changed from application).
 - Bin run seed may be used. Either a cleaning receipt or an invoice will need to be submitted for Proof of Certification.
 - Items needed for proof of certification **MUST** be submitted to the District office by **January 1, 2025**
 - Spot checks will be conducted at the District's discretion throughout the growing season.

- Incentive payment checks will be authorized for payment following spring cover crop verification scouting. Spring verification scouting will occur sometime in late March 2025, depending on climatic conditions.
- **Required Plan and Forms:**
The applicant must have the following plan(s) that meets state requirements to be eligible for this program:
 - ***Chapter 102 Agriculture Erosion and Sediment Control Plan or Conservation Plan AND (If Needed) Chapter 91 Manure Management Plan or Nutrient Management Plan.**
 - The following forms will be completed by the **farmer/operator**:
 1. Application Form: This form must be submitted to the Conservation District by July 12, 2024.
 2. IRS Form W-9: All producers must complete a W-9 to be eligible for incentive payments.
 - The following forms will be completed by the **Conservation District**:
 1. Enrollment Verification Form: After receiving the completed Application Form and W-9, the Operator will be issued an Enrollment Verification Form. The Enrollment Verification Form will inform the operator if the submitted acres were approved and the number of eligible acres. This will be done by August 1, 2024.
 2. Cover Verification Form: Following spring cover verification scouting, Conservation District will file Cover Verification Form and authorize payment. Growers who do not meet cover criteria, and are deemed ineligible for payment, will be provided a copy of Cover Verification Form and a written explanation by the Conservation District.

To receive incentive payment, growers MUST have all forms on file with the Conservation District.

- **Operator Responsibilities:**
 - Grower must sign and submit all forms by given deadlines.
 - Grower must plant cover crops by methods approved by the Conservation District to be eligible for incentive payment.
 - First tier: Choose at least 5 species of Cover Crops (mix should be planted between August 1 - September 15) at a rate payment of \$70 per acre. Second tier: Choose at least 3 species of Cover Crops (mix should be planted between September 16 - October 30) at a rate payment of \$50 per acre. Third tier: Choose at least 1 Winter Small Grain (to be planted after August 1) at a rate payment of \$30 per acre. – See Planting Timeline & Cover Crop Suggestion Table in the Application Form.
 - Soil cover via **live cover crop** (no winter-kill) must be **maintained until April 1, 2025. Cover crops cannot be destroyed before the winter freeze.**
 - Soil cover must achieve no less than 50% total surface cover by inspection time in March to receive payment. Soil cover is defined as live cover crop and previous crop residue. 50% total soil cover must be achieved via any combination of these cover types.
 - Exceptions will be made if adverse climatic/agronomic conditions prevail. Any exceptions to the deadline will be made by the Conservation District.
 - Cover crops cannot be harvested in any manner.
 - Manure application during cover crop growing period (August 1, 2024 to April 1, 2025) is permitted.
 - Grower must still meet 25% soil cover criteria if applying manure in winter according to Chapter 93 regulations. Any manure applied must be applied per landowner/operator's Nutrient Management Plan or Manure Management Plan.

If you have any questions please contact Rebecca Radel @ rradel@perryco.org 717-275-5111