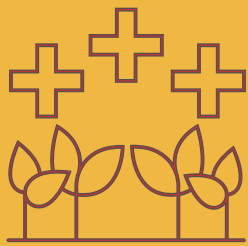




MIDWEST IS BEST



COVER CROPS

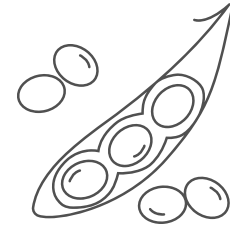
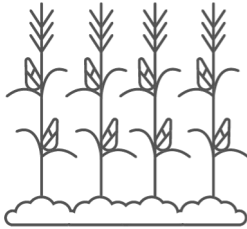
COVERING YOUR BOTTOM LINE AND YOUR FIELDS

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WHY COVER CROPS?

Cover crops have gained interest from eastern corn belt farmers within the last several years. Some attractive advantages include: controlling water and wind erosion, and improved crop yield. According to a 2024 survey, Indiana farmers planted more than 1.38 million acres of cover crops, nearly 20,000 less acres than 2023. In Indiana, cover crops are now planted on more land across the state than that of any commodity crop outside corn and soybeans.

More Indiana farmers are using cover crops to build healthy and productive soils, which helps with weed suppression, improves water infiltration and cycles nutrients while still increasing soil organic matter. Cover crops help increase yields of commodity crops, while reducing needs for nitrogen and other added fertilizer.



Corn planted following a cover crop had a

3.1% INCREASE IN YIELD

compared to side-by-side fields with no cover crops.

Likewise, soybean yields

INCREASED 4.3%

following cover crops.

WHEN TO COVER CROP

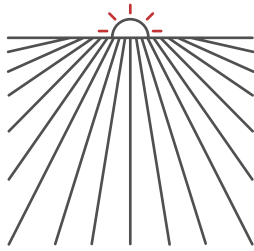
With cover crops normally being planted in the fall, they are designed to keep roots in the ground throughout winter, which improves soil health and helps filter water. In Indiana, the most common type of cover crops are fall-seeded cereals, such as rye or wheat and fall-seeded annual ryegrass, planted post-harvest. Other cover crops have different seasonalities. Oats are typically planted in the late summer, even though they winterkill, whereas hairy vetch and bigflower vetch are planted in the late summer or early fall. Selecting the right timing for cover crops should be based on a farm's cropping season and plan for the following year.

In 2024, cover crops helped keep enough sediment to fill 480 Olympic-sized swimming pools out of Indiana's waterways.

HOW TO COVER CROP

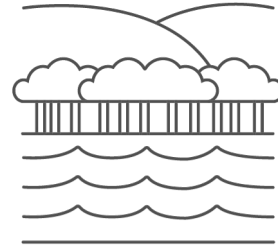
There are three typical ways of seeding cover crops: drilling, broadcasting with or without shallow incorporation, or aerial seeding. Drilling may be the most reliable method of planting cover crops as it allows for good soil to seed contact. Broadcasting seed on harvested ground and then shallowly incorporating it with harrows or other vertical tillage tools is another option. Aerial seeding utilizes aircraft to broadcast seed into a standing crop. Application methods should match several factors: seed type, intent for the cover crop, environmental factors and topography of the field.

2024



Cover crop acres:

1.38 MILLION ACRES



Saved from Indiana waterways:

~ 1.8 MILLION TONS of sediment ~

4.4 MILLION POUNDS of nitrogen

~ 2.2 MILLION POUNDS of
phosphorus

What's that value to you?

ON A 100 ACRE-TRACT:

440 pounds of N	220 pounds of P
x \$0.37/lb	x \$1.00/lb
\$162.80	\$220.00

**SAVE \$382.80 FOR YOUR
POCKETBOOK AND THE WATERWAYS**

Multiply that over your entire operation and you'll see why it's better to make sure the nutrients you've paid for don't end up down river.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Want to try cover crops, but don't know where to start? Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District office, FSA office, local seed salesman, crop consultant or retailer agronomist. There are several cover crop programs available to test cover crops in your fields.

Cover crops can be a significant opportunity to impact yields, bottom lines, soil health and ultimately, water quality. Utilizing cover crops ensures your soils stay right where they're needed for this year's cropping season and for generations to come.

After all, you settled here for a reason, the Midwest *is* Best. So let's keep your soil (and your nutrients) right here, too.

Get started: inagnutrients.org

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