

Cover Crop Initiative tied to Reduced Crop Insurance Premiums

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Cover crops are becoming more and more prevalent across Iowa. Last year, nearly 600,000 acres were seeded to cover crops or roughly 2.6% of the 23 million acres in corn or soybean production. Cover crops are a vital part of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy aimed at reducing nitrogen and phosphorus. Cover crops also control topsoil erosion, improve soil organic matter, suppress weeds, and increase your soil's overall water holding capacity. Continued cover crop implementation and expansion are imperative for landowners who are focused on protecting their soils.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) worked with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) to launch a three-year project aimed at expanding cover crop usage. Eligible applicants will receive a \$5/acre crop insurance discount on the following year's insurance invoice. This project is designed to incentivize farmers who are not utilizing other state or federal cover crop initiatives such as WQI, IFIP, EQIP, or CSP.

Acres seeded to cover crops in 2017 that will be planted to an insurable crop in 2018 are eligible. Eligible seedings must utilize the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) seeding recommendations highlighting seeding dates, appropriate seeding rates, and best agronomic practices. IDALS will verify acres based on applications received, and confirmed applications will be forwarded to the RMA for processing on 2018 crop insurance premiums. The cover crops can be grazed as forage for livestock but cannot be harvested for grains. At this time there is no limit to the number of acres an individual farmer can apply for. 200,000 acres have been funded for the fall of 2017 and additional funding options will be explored if needed to meet demand.

For more information, please visit <https://www.cleanwateriowa.org/covercropdemo-main/> or <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/covercropdemo> to sign up for the project.

Applications are due by 5pm on January 15th, 2018.

If you are a landowner ready to invest in cover crops, let an experienced Peoples Company Land Manager help you. We can help you with access to this program and others. For more information, please email us at LandManagement@PeoplesCompany.com or call 855.800.5263 (LAND).