

Thinking Green for Fall 2017

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Mollie Aronowitz, Land Manager – mollie@peoplescompany.com and Kyle Walker, Land Manager – kyle@peoplescompany.com

Peoples Company is dedicated to improving soil conservation practices on managed farms. And that decision is twofold – reducing soil erosion addresses nutrient leaching causing water quality issues in our state. But holding the rich topsoil on your farm is also critical for holding the long term value of your farm.

[Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship \(IDALS\)](#) has a winter cover crops cost share program available following 2017 harvest. This is the second year for the program and Peoples Company Land Managers tested the program on a handful of farms in 2016. There are certainly a few kinks to work out in the system when working with a new government program, but we think jumping through the necessary hoops *is worth the funding available for such an important conservation practice.*

Cover crops is one of the corner posts of conservation farm practices in Iowa. Planting a small grain after harvest provides cover during the dormant years of the Iowa growing season. By having green growth year-

round, we can reduce soil erosion, limit nitrogen leaching, suppress weeds, increase soil organic matter and improve your overall soil quality.

But because there is still a lot to learn about best conservation practices, cover crops are not always a homerun. Three years out of five, cover crops will do exactly what we want them to do. Those other two years, Mother Nature might step in and negatively affect growing conditions. We are in a learning phase on many conservation practices and operators are leery of testing out practices on rented land. The expected input cost for cover crops is \$35 per acre. That can add up over an operation – and reasonably so, operators are going to invest first on owned land before rented land.

A catalyst for farm conservation in Iowa is for landowners to come alongside operators and invest in on-farm conservation efforts. With the IDALS cost share money available, cover crops this fall is a perfect first step.

- First time enrollment reimbursement will be up to \$25/acre up to 160 acres.
- Previously enrolled reimbursement will be up to \$15/acre up to 160 acres.

The time is now to get in on cost share dollars for fall cover crops. Funding will become available July 1st and will be first come, first serve.

If you are a landowner ready to invest in cover crops, let an experienced Peoples Company Land Manager help you. We will work with you and your operator to create a plan, sign up for cost share dollars, and execute planting in the fall. For more information, please email us at LandManagement@PeoplesCompany.com or call 855.800.5263 (LAND).

