

Planning for 2020 Cover Crops

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With the harvest season fast approaching, Peoples Company Land Managers are working to finalize plans for fall 2020 cover crops. Extending living green cover after the cash crop is harvested has numerous benefits to farmland:

- reduces erosion, keeping valuable topsoil on the farm
- increases organic matter
- increases soil biodiversity and biological activity
- scavenges nutrients, keeping expensive crop inputs in the field rather than in our water sources

Cover crops can be flown on before the cash crop is harvested or planted post-harvest. There is risk and reward to both, with Mother Nature typically deciding the fate.

Aerial applications provide more control over timing and the ability to offer the cover crop a longer window to grow. On a leased farm, a non-farming landowner can coordinate the aerial application without worry about timing of harvest. The risk is gaining good seed-to-soil contact for cover crop germination.



Photo: Tillage radish and cereal rye aerial applied in late summer on a corn field in central Iowa. This photo was taken in early November 2019 after the first snowfall of the year. The earlier planting date allowed the tillage radish more time to grow a large tuber.

Planting the cover crop after harvest ensures good seed-to-soil contact but could be significantly later than aerial application if the harvest season goes long. There is also a cost savings opportunity if a cover crop could be spread with an already scheduled fertilizer application.

Along with choosing the best application method for a farm, Peoples Company Land Managers can assist with choosing plant varieties that best meet the needs of the soil and compliment the next cash crop.

While current grain markets are tightening farming profits, it is important to stay the course with investing in annual cover crop plantings. Consistent use of cover crops is a core conservation practice with long reaching benefits. And when soil health is improved, there is opportunity for increased yields on the cash crop. When yield increases, farmland rent and land values follow.

If you are a landowner wanting to invest in conservation practices to protect long term land value, let an experienced Peoples Company Land Manager help you. We will work with you and your farm operator to create a cover crop plan and execute planting in the fall of 2020.

There are several cost share programs available, including [Peoples Company's Cover Crop Initiative](#), to help incentivize wider adoption of cover crops. Peoples Company Land Managers make it a priority to understand the available programs in every area they are working in.

For more information, please visit www.peoplescompany.com or email landmanagement@peoplescompany.com.