

**Maryland Department of Agriculture
Cover Crop Plus Pilot Program
Fact Sheet**

MDA is offering a new pilot cover crop program with increased incentives and increased management requirements. The application will be available online at the MDA website. Applicants will be required to print the application and complete prior to returning to their local Soil Conservation District Office.

Cover Crop Plus Pilot Program Guidelines:

Signup: July 1 through July 18th (Same sign-up period as traditional program)

Application: Available on the MDA website (https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/pages/cover_crop.aspx)

- Farmers can download, fill out, and take (or mail) application to SCD office for SCD review and signatures.
- They should not sign up the same fields for both cover crop programs.
- SCDs mail completed applications to MDA.
- MDA will assign an agreement number and mail out approval letter.
- Farmers should have control of planted fields for 3 years.

Fall Certification:

- Cover Crop must be established/planted by October 1st. Farmer needs to contact SCD office **within 1 week of planting cover crop**, and no later than October 7th.
- Cover crop must be a **mix** containing at least 50% cereal grain and 25% legume.
- Spot checks will be conducted by the State and/or District.
- Same documentation required as traditional program (e.g., seed tags, seed tests.)
- The SCD will work with Farmers to supply paper maps to MDA detailing fields planted.
- MDA **will not** be providing fall partial payments.

Spring Certification:

- Farmer needs **to contact SCD office within 3 days of terminating cover crop**, or planting into a living cover crop (planting green).
- Spring planting must occur within one week of cover crop termination.
- Spring Spot checks will be conducted to verify cover crop termination, and the planting of subsequent crop within a week and meeting 30% surface residue coverage requirement.
- Farmers and SCD staff complete Spring Certification form and claim-for-payment. Mail forms, along with documentation (e.g., marked up maps) to MDA. Payment will be sent after spring reporting is complete and verified.

For more information concerning MDA's Cover Crop Program or to access the Cover Crop Plus application please visit MDA's Cover Crop Website at:

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/pages/cover_crop.aspx

If you have any other questions concerning Cover Crop Plus or other Cover Crop Programs, please call the District at 301-590-2855.