



Cost-Share Guidelines for Cover Crops

Definition

A cover crop is a crop planted for the purpose of providing seasonal cover or for other conservation purposes, such as improvement of soil, erosion control, control of pests, or to provide supplemental forage for livestock. A cover crop is planted between cash crops (i.e. corn, wheat, soybeans, or other income-generating crop) and is typically terminated prior to or shortly after the next cash crop is planted. Termination is accomplished by means of chemical sprays, mowing, tillage, rolling/crimping or seasonal frost/freezing. A crop that is mechanically harvested or planted for the purpose of harvesting seed for sale is not considered a cover crop.

Benefits

The use of cover crops in agricultural systems provides many benefits to soil and water resources, wildlife and the environment. These benefits include:

- Reduction of soil erosion by wind and water
- Reduction of water pollution from sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and bacteria
- Increased soil organic matter
- Capture, recycle, and redistribution of nutrients in the soil profile
- Enhanced biological nitrogen fixation and other biological activity in the soil
- Increased biodiversity in the soil and the surrounding environment
- Weed suppression and disruption of disease cycles in cropping systems
- Provision of supplemental livestock forage
- Soil moisture management
- Reduction of soil compaction
- Reduction of runoff from crop fields
- Reduction of fertilizer and pesticide inputs
- Increased drought tolerance

Purpose

The primary purpose for providing cost-share for cover crops through the Marmaton WRAPS Cost-Share Program is to **PROMOTE** cover crop usage and **INCREASE ADOPTION** of the practice in the watershed. *It is not intended to support the use of cover crops by those producers who have already adopted the practice as part of their normal cropping pattern.*

Cost-Share Rate

Producers will receive 50% of the actual cost of cover crop establishment, up to a maximum cost-share payment amount of \$30/acre/year.

Guidelines and Criteria

Eligibility criteria for cover crop practices through the Marmaton WRAPS Cost-Share Program are as follows:

- 1) Cost-share funds will be used for the establishment of cover crops in the Marmaton WRAPS priority subwatersheds. Eligible establishment expenses include the cost of seed, fertilizer, seedbed preparation (including tillage or chemical seedbed prep), inoculants, and planting of the cover crop (including aerial seeding methods).
- 2) Cover crop cost-share funds may not be used for cover crop maintenance (example: chemical or mechanical weed control), termination of the cover crop, fencing or water for livestock grazing of the cover crop, or other activities that extend beyond establishment.
- 3) Producers are eligible for cover crop cost-share only if cover crops are not in their normal cropping patterns or rotation for the field/fields in the cost-share application.
- 4) Cost-share funds for establishing a cover crop may be provided up to three times per field. While a contract is only a one-year commitment, Marmaton WRAPS encourages the planting of cover crops for multiple years. Thus, producers may re-apply for funding for a second and third year for each field. The cost-share rate remains the same each year, with a maximum payment of \$30/ac for establishment of the cover crop.
- 5) Cover crop seed shall be free of noxious weeds.
- 6) If a cover crop is planted using aerial seeding methods, the seeding rate shall be increased 1.5 times the normal seeding rate for other planting methods.
- 7) If a cover crop is to be used for livestock forage, a picture of the cover crop must be sent to Marmaton WRAPS prior to allowing cattle onto the field to graze.
- 8) Cover crops used for livestock forage shall not be overgrazed, but should be utilized so that adequate cover is maintained, necessary re-growth occurs, and soil erosion is avoided.
- 9) If the cover crop is planted in a livestock only targeted area, the cover crop shall be used for grazing in a manner that reduces livestock waste loading of streams (for example, the cover crop will eliminate or significantly reduce use of a concentrated winter feeding sites in the field).
- 10) To be eligible for cost-share, conservation tillage/minimum tillage must be used. Please submit tillage practices as part of the application for cost-share in order for an eligibility determination to be made.

Decision-Making

The Marmaton WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team is the decision-making body for the program.

Eligible Crops (not an all-inclusive list)

tillage radish	red clover	cowpea
chickling vetch	sunhemp	rye
winter wheat	triticale	barley
annual ryegrass	winter pea	sweetclovers
millet	sorghum-sudangrass	oats
turnip	winter canola	mung beans



Cover Crop Cost-Share Program Application

Part I – Producer Information and Tillage

1. Landowner/Cooperator Information:

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 SSN/FEIN: _____
 Phone #: _____
 Email: _____
 Name of primary person to contact if different from
 landowner: _____
 Phone #: _____

2. Provide a description of tillage practices:

Notes: 1. Fields are eligible if cover crops are not in the normal rotation. 2. Conservation tillage/minimum tillage is required to be eligible for program. 3. This contract is a one-year commitment; however, producer may reapply for a 2nd and 3rd year for each field.

Part II – Project Location, Acres, and Crop Rotations

Field Location (Legal Description)	County	Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 12)	Number of Acres	Current Crop Rotation	Proposed Crop Rotation with Cover Crop(s)
Total					

*Producer will receive 50% of the actual cost of cover crop establishment, up to a maximum payment of \$30/acre per year.
 *If a cover crop is to be used for livestock forage, a picture of the cover crop must be sent to Marmaton WRAPS before allowing cattle on to graze.

Part III – Landowner/Cooperator Signature

Landowner/Cooperator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Part IV – Marmaton WRAPS Project Approval

This contract is made this day by and between Marmaton WRAPS and the landowner(s) listed in Part I. The cost-share/incentive project described in Parts I and II must be installed by the project funding expiration date listed below, unless extended by Marmaton WRAPS. Such an extension shall be in writing and shall be attached to this contract.

Marmaton WRAPS approves cost-share assistance for the practice(s) listed in Part I above.

Total Approved Funding Amount: _____ Funding Expiration Date: _____

Authorized Marmaton WRAPS Signature: _____ Date: _____