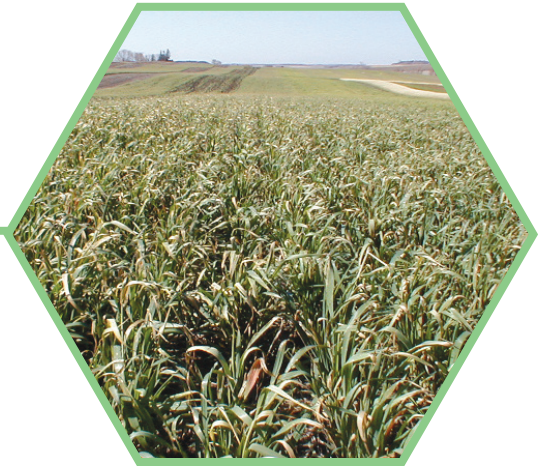


Are you covered?

Stop soil erosion on canning crop acres

Developed by the BALMM Cover Crop Strategy Team



Oats no-tilled into pea stubble provided 86% residue the following April.

When canning crops, such as sweet corn and peas, are harvested, the fields are commonly left with little residue cover for the remainder of the season. These fields are at risk of losing valuable topsoil when exposed to heavy rains. Creative canning crop growers are successfully using cover crops to protect exposed soil when it is most vulnerable to erosion. Cover crops also offer the opportunity to “double crop”. Here are some windows of opportunity for maximizing sunshine with cover crops:



Plant oats or barley after canning crop harvest. They are inexpensive and provide cover until spring, even after dying back in the fall. Corn or soybeans can easily be no-tilled into oat or barley residue.



Plant rye in late summer or fall after canning crop harvest to protect the soil. Rye can provide forage for grazing in the fall and spring-when permanent pasture productivity is low. Rye planted at this time provides excellent weed suppression.



Dairy farmers who plant canning crops can then plant alfalfa after the crop harvest. Alfalfa planted in August establishes well due to warm temperatures and low weed competition. The alfalfa is harvested for forage, fixes nitrogen for use by later crops, and provides a place for spreading manure during the growing season.



EQIP offers \$15/acre for cover crops on up to 250 acres for up to 3 years. Cover crops will also increase your qualifications and payment potential for a Conservation Security Program (CSP) contract. Contact NRCS to learn more (see below).

The Basin Alliance for the Lower Mississippi in Minnesota (BALMM) is an ad-hoc coalition of groups formed to coordinate efforts to protect and improve water quality in the Lower Mississippi River Basin. Contact the MN Pollution Control Agency in Rochester for more information at (507)285-7343 or at www.pca.state.mn.us.

In cooperation with the MN Department of Agriculture. Contact Mark Zumwinkle at 651-201-6240

Local NRCS offices: Olmsted County 507-289-6239 / Wabasha County 651-565-2646
Winona County 507-523-2171 / Steele County 507-451-6730 / Mower County 507-433-8429
Fillmore County 507-765-3878 / Dodge County 507-374-6364 / Goodhue County 651-923-5285
Houston County 507-724-5261 / Rice County 507-334-1887

NRCS website: www.nrcs.usda.gov

Maximizing Sunshine! Windows of Opportunity for Cover Cropping

CROP	GROWING SEASON												
	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
FIELD CORN	Plant Crop												
						Aerial Seed Winter Rye							GRAZE
CORN SILAGE	Plant Crop												
							Plant Winter Rye						GRAZE
SOY-BEANS	Plant Crop												
					Aerial Seed Winter Rye		GRAZE				GRAZE		
PEAS	Plant Crop					Plant Oats/Barley/Soybeans							
								Harvest: Green Chop or Round Bale					
					Plant Winter Rye		GRAZE				GRAZE		
SWEET CORN				Plant Oats/Barley		Winter Kill / Pre-season Cover Crop							
	Pre-season Cover Crop		No-till Sweet Corn										
					Plant Alfalfa								
					Plant Winter Rye		GRAZE				GRAZE		
LIMA/SNAP BEANS			Plant Crop										
					Aerial Seed Winter Rye		GRAZE				GRAZE		

Are You Covered.indd

For information on aerial seeding winter rye, see the MDA Greenbook at www.mda.state.mn.us. Contact your local ag supplier for information on killing back winter rye; can be done at the same time as killback in preparation for no-till seeding. Prepared by the BALMM Cover Crop Strategy Team 3/05.