



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Department Announces 2025 Cover Crop Grant Sign-Up Dates**

**ANNAPOLIS, MD (June 12, 2025)**- The **Maryland Department of Agriculture** has announced this year's **Cover Crop Sign-Up** will run from **June 23 through July 17, 2025** at local soil conservation districts. This popular conservation program provides farmers with financial assistance to offset costs to plant fall cover crops, building healthy soils and protecting the Chesapeake Bay. The program's budget for this year is \$22 million. "Planting cover crops is one of the best ways for farmers to protect our precious soil and water resources," said **Maryland Agriculture Secretary Kevin Atticks**. "Last year's sign-up was one of the largest in our program's history. Maryland farmers planted nearly 500,000 acres of fall cover crops using over \$30 million in department cost-share grants. This year's program has been streamlined to more fully align with state budget projections and make funding go further. Our goal is to support as many farmers as possible in their conservation work."

The department's Cover Crop Program provides Maryland farmers with grants to plant a range of cold-hardy cereal grains and mixes. Farmers may plant cover crops after corn, soybeans, sorghum, tobacco, vegetables, hemp, millet and—new this year—sunflowers and sod. Cover crop fields enrolled in this program may not be harvested but may be grazed or chopped for on-farm livestock forage after becoming well-established.

#### **2025-2026 Program highlights include:**

- The base payment is \$35/acre.
- Farmers can earn up to \$65/acre with add-on incentives.
- Farmers who aerially seed cover crops into standing corn by October 10 qualify for a \$10/acre incentive.
- Non-poultry manure may be applied to cover crop fields in the fall for a flat rate of \$25/acre.
- To participate in this program, farmers must sign up to plant at least 10 acres of cover crops.

Fall-planted cover crops benefit the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland's farmland by recycling unused plant nutrients from the preceding summer crop while fortifying the soil for spring planting. Once established, cover crops work all winter to combat erosion, supply the soil with organic matter, reduce weeds and pests, and protect fields from drought and extreme rainfall. As an added bonus, cover crops capture carbon from the air and store it in the soil.

Additionally, the department is offering a webinar on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025 from 11 am - 12pm** to help interested farmers learn more about this year's program and the water quality and soil health benefits of cover crops. Speakers from the University of Maryland's Wye Research and Education Center include Dr. Kenneth Staver, Associate Research Scientist, and Kurt Vollmar, Extension Specialist. Department staff will also provide an update on this year's program. Additional speakers will be announced soon. **Attendance awards 1 Nutrient Management CEU to farmers certified to prepare their own nutrient management plans or 1 credit toward renewing a nutrient management voucher.** [REGISTER NOW FOR THE WEBINAR](#)

The Cover Crop Program is administered by the department's Conservation Grants Program and the state's 23 soil conservation districts. It is open to Maryland farmers in good standing with the program and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management requirements. A completed [Current Nutrient Management Plan Certification](#) is required at sign-up. Other restrictions and conditions apply. Funding for the 2025-2026 Cover Crop Program is provided by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund.

Farmers should visit their local [soil conservation district](#) between June 23 and July 17 to apply in person for the cover crop grants. Those who participated in last year's program should check their mailboxes for an information packet. Additional information is also available on the department's [website](#).

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