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The Practical
**COVER
CROPPER**

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Frequently asked questions about cover crop costs



Even though corn and soy are just taking off, it is already time to begin thinking about fall cover crops! Here are some of the most common questions we get asked about cover crop expenses, from **Rebecca Clay**, PFI field crops viability coordinator.

How much do cover crops cost?

Combined seed and application costs vary from farmer to farmer, from as low as \$5 per acre to upwards of \$50 per acre. For the over 1,110 farmers in PFI's 2022 cover crop cost-share program, the median seed cost was \$16

per acre, and the median application cost was also \$16 per acre – up a few dollars per acre relative to 2021 costs.

Does using cover crops pencil out economically?

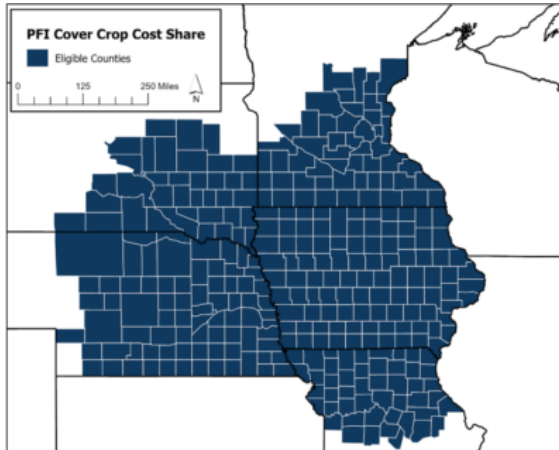
Even with the upfront expense of covers, about 72 percent of farmers in our 2022 [cover crop cost-share program](#) reported that **covers positively or very positively impacted their farm financial goals**. Farmers cited that cover crops decreased weed pressure, increased long-term yield stability and provided additional forage or grazing value.

What sort of cost-share is available to help cover the cost?

For eligible farmers, PFI offers [\\$10 per acre cost-share on unlimited acres](#). **You can double-up PFI cost-share and publicly funded cost-share** on the same acres. About 64 percent of PFI cost-share participants also received public cost-share last year.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Enroll in our 2023 cost-share program today



If you intend to seed cover crops in fall 2023 and farm in the blue area of the map, you are likely eligible for PFI's cover crop cost-share.

Participants receive **\$10 per acre** on an **unlimited number of acres**.

View [program details](#) and [eligibility requirements](#) on our website, or call (515) 232-5661, and press 2 to chat with us about the program.

[Apply today](#)

Pair PFI cost-share with NRCS and IDALS programs



Did you know you can stack public cost-share programs on top of enrollment in a PFI cost-share (a privately-funded program)?

The Center for Rural Affairs outlines cost-shares available in [this fact sheet, "Guide to Cover Crop Initiatives."](#)

[Contact your local USDA service center](#) to get specific information about what types of public cost-share for which your farm may be eligible

Welcome Megan to PFI staff

Megan Bark joins PFI as the senior cost-share administrative coordinator. Her work focuses on managing back-end processes and gathering information for PFI's field crop cost-share programs.

Megan grew up on a small hobby farm in central Iowa. She double-majored in business management and horticulture, and minored in



entrepreneurial studies at Iowa State University. She dreams of buying an acreage in the near future.

[Learn more about Megan.](#)

IN THE FIELD

Central Iowa: Schedule your early fall interseeding!



Heartland Co-op offers late summer and early fall cover crop interseeding applications with the Montag Fortifier 2212 Cover Crop Seeder via the [Central Iowa Cover Crop Partnership.](#)

You can get a head-start on over-crop growth for \$14 per acre, or \$12 per acre if enrolled by July 1, with additional discounts available.

See if you fall in the target area, and [sign up on their website.](#)

Video: Chad Bell shares how cover crops are an ROI-positive practice



Over time, **Chad Bell** of Viola, Illinois, has been altering his techniques to make cover cropping a practice that pays for itself.

Listen to Chad share what he's learned [in this recording from our 2021 Virtual Cover Crop Boot Camp.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events below are listed in central standard time.



Field day season has arrived

Join us at a field day this summer!

[Check out the line-up on the PFI website](#) and mark your calendars for field days on relay cropping, integrating field crops and livestock and a variety of cover crop topics.

Field day: Creating a Soil Health System With No-Till, Cover Crops and Livestock



June 17 | 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Kurash Family Farm is located near Fort Atkinson, Iowa, where the family raises corn, soybeans, rye, hay and beef cattle.

They no-till and plant green for both corn and soybeans, drill hybrid rye in the fall and drill a cover crop mix following rye in the summer.

At this field day, Ross will discuss how he has made cover crops and no-till work on his farm. Guests will also see how Ross is working towards his soil health goals. [RSVP online.](#)

PFI events

June 9: PFI Field Day - [Profitability with Cover Crops](#)

Hosted by: James Hepp & Family
4 - 6 p.m. | Rockwell City, IA

June 13: PFI Field Day - [No-Till Organic Relay Cropping](#)

Hosted by: Caleb Akin & Noah Wendt
10 a.m. - Noon | Cambridge, IA

July 7: PFI Field Day - [Drilling Down on Oat Varieties](#)

Hosted by: Neil & Elizabeth Peterson and sons Paul & Timothy
10 a.m. - Noon | Fonda, IA

July 19: PFI Field Day- [Relay Cropping, Permanent Clover and Irrigation Systems](#)

Hosted by: Patrick White & Chuck White
10 a.m. - Noon | Spencer, IA

Friends of PFI events

June 13: Field Day- [Cover Crop Field Day](#)

Hosted by: Iowa Learning Farms & Whiterock Conservancy
5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Coon Rapids, IA

June 14: Webinar - [Illinois Cover Crop On-Farm Network: Cover Crop Cocktails](#)

Hosted by: ICCON with PFI's Morgan Jennings
9 - 10 a.m. | Online

[View more events on our calendar](#)

Want to host a cover crop meet up? Are you planning or hosting a cover crop event? Contact taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org to plan something or to promote your event.

COVER CROP POLL

Send us your cover crop poll ideas! We want to know what YOU want to know. Reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

Will you attend a PFI field day in 2023?

I'm attending at least one.

Select

I'm hosting!

Select

I'm attending a non-PFI field day.

Select

I won't be able to make it this year.

Select

Previous poll results:

Have you been able to reduce herbicide applications with cover crops on any fields?

- **Yes, I am making fewer herbicide passes - 46.7%**
- Yes, I no longer apply residual product on some of my fields - **20%**
- Not yet, but I plan to in the future - **20%**
- No, my usage is the same - **13.3%**

CONTACT OUR COVER CROPS TEAM

Solveig Orngard

Field Crops Education Coordinator

solveig.orngard@practicalfarmers.org

Taylor Hintch

Field Crops Education Coordinator

taylor.hintch@practicalfarmers.org

Lydia English

Field Crops Viability Manager

lydia.english@practicalfarmers.org

Rebecca Clay

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

rebecca.clay@practicalfarmers.org

Chelsea Ferrie

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

chelsea.ferrie@practicalfarmers.org

Morgan Jennings

Field Crops Viability Coordinator

morgan.jennings@practicalfarmers.org

Chat with any of us by calling the PFI office at (515)-232-5661.

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