



## COVER CROP INCENTIVE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Dauphin County Conservation District (DCCD) seeks to promote the use of cover crops on Dauphin County farms. A tiered incentive payment based on method of establishment is being offered to support this goal.

- **Sign up deadline and program eligibility:**
  - Sign up deadline: applications must be in the office by July 31, 2023. Applications received after this date may be considered at the discretion of DCCD dependent upon funding availability or program demand.
  - Applications need to be fully filled out and maps submitted to be considered complete.
  - Submission of Signup Form does not guarantee enrollment.
  - ***Grower will be notified when accepted into the program. Once enrollment is completed, we will notify the farmer of their eligibility status and how many acres will be eligible for incentive payment, these figures will be based on total program acres applied for and available grant funding.***
- **Incentive Payment Specifics**
  - Cover Crop Incentive Program is a one (1) year program.
  - Cover Crop growth shall be maintained until April 1, 2024.
  - This program is open to all farmers in Dauphin County. Acreage limits will be at the discretion of DCCD and dependent upon applications received.
  - Operator must be in management control of the crop in order to qualify.
  - Acreage that is already enrolled in a separate incentive program will not be eligible.
  - Incentive Funding will be paid based on the following: **Tier 1: \$40 per acre (No-Till\*\*)**, **Tier 2: \$55 per acre (No-Till\*\* Multi-Species)**, **Tier 3: \$25 per acre (Minimum-Till\*)**, **Tier 4: \$40 per acre (Minimum-Till\* Multi-Species)**.
  - An initial maximum of **300 total acres** may be applied for through this program. Applicants are encouraged to submit more than 300 acres as additional acreage may be funded at the discretion of the district, dependent upon funding availability and program demand.
  - Only approved winter cover crops are eligible. Alternative cover crops that are not pre-authorized will NOT be considered for incentive payment.  
**50% of total Cover Crop species mix cannot winter-kill**, see Cover Crop Suggestion Table attached in the Application Form.
  - Any mix planted should refer to suggested planting dates and seeding rates, listed in The Agronomy Guide. Minimum seeding rate for any Tier is 45 lbs per acre and shall comprise no less than 50% winter small grains.
  - Proof for Certification, to be submitted by the Grower: 1) Proof of seed receipt and seed tags, 2) Acres where planted field map (if acreage changed from application).
    - Bin run seed may be used. Either a cleaning receipt or an invoice will need to be submitted for Proof of Certification.
  - Items needed for proof of certification need to be submitted to DCCD office by **January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.
  - Spot checks will be conducted at DCCD's discretion throughout the growing season.

- Incentive payment checks will be authorized for payment following spring cover crop verification scouting. Spring verification scouting will occur sometime in March 2024, depending on climatic conditions.

- **Required Plan and Forms:**

The applicant must have the following plan(s) that meets state requirements to be eligible for this program:

**\*Chapter 102 Agriculture Erosion and Sediment Control Plan or Conservation Plan AND (If Needed) Chapter 91 Manure Management Plan or Nutrient Management Plan. Plans may be requested for verification at the discretion of the district.**

- The following forms will be completed by the **farmer/operator**:
  1. Application Form: This form must be submitted by mail, email, or in person to DCCD by July 31, 2023.
  2. IRS Form W-9: All producers must complete a W-9 to be eligible for incentive payments to be submitted with the application form
- **The following forms will be completed by DCCD:**
  1. Enrollment Verification Form: After receiving the completed Application Form and W-9, the Operator will be issued an Enrollment Verification Form. The Enrollment Verification Form will inform the operator if the submitted acres were approved and the number of eligible acres. This will be done by August 14, 2023.
  2. Cover Verification Form: Following spring cover verification scouting, DCCD will file the Cover Verification Form and authorize payment. Growers who do not meet cover criteria, and are deemed ineligible for payment, will be provided a copy of the Cover Verification Form and a written explanation by DCCD.
  3. IRS Form 1099: All program participants will receive a 1099 form for funds received.

**To receive incentive payment, growers MUST have all forms on file with DCCD.**

- **Operator Responsibilities:**

- Grower must sign and submit all forms by given deadlines.
- Grower must plant cover crops by methods approved by DCCD to be eligible for incentive payment.
- Choose between **Tier 1: \$40 per acre (No-Till\*\*)**, **Tier 2: \$55 per acre (No-Till\*\* Multi-Species)**, **Tier 3: \$25 per acre (Minimum-Till\*)**, **Tier 4: \$40 per acre (Minimum-Till\* Multi-Species)**.
- Soil cover including live cover crop must be **maintained until April 1, 2024**.
- Soil cover must achieve no less than 50% total surface cover by inspection time in March to receive payment. Soil cover is defined as live cover crop and previous crop residue. 50% total soil cover must be achieved via any combination of these cover types.
- Exceptions will be made if adverse climatic/agronomic conditions prevail. Any exceptions to the deadline will be made by DCCD.
- Manure application during cover crop growing period (August 1, 2023 to April 1, 2024) is permitted.
- Grower must still meet 25% soil cover criteria if applying manure in winter according to Chapter 93 regulations. Any manure applied must be applied per landowner/operator’s Nutrient Management Plan or Manure Management Plan.

**(\*,\*\*) Tillage Definitions:**

**\*\*Minimum Tillage** – one pass with a light disk.

**\*\*No Till** – Cover crop broadcast or No-Till drilled into a field where no tillage has been done.