

**2022-2023**  
**NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**WINTER COVER CROP PROGRAM**  
 NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE

**PURPOSE:** Winter cover crops improve water quality by absorbing unused crop nutrients, improving soil health and reducing soil erosion. The New Castle Conservation District is offering cost-sharing to encourage the use of cover crops.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

Producers and landowners actively engaged in farming. A minimum of 5 acres is required per farm. A maximum of 400 acres per business entity is allowed. To be eligible for a payment, the New Castle Conservation District must approve the practice before planting begins. Eligible land must be following an annual crop (row crops or vegetables). Acreages following perennial crops, hay or pasture are not eligible.

**SIGNUP:**

Signup will begin on Monday, August 1st at the New Castle Conservation District Office (2430 Old County Road, Newark, DE 19702) and continue until all funds are obligated. Office hours are 8:00 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. Deadline for signup is close of business on Friday, October 7th. Forms are available on-line at [www.newcastlecd.org](http://www.newcastlecd.org)

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Cost-share Rates and Planting Dates\***

<b>CROP</b>	<b>PLANTING DATE</b>	<b>INCORPORATED SEEDING RATE (includes drills, no-till, broadcast with disk or vertical tillage)</b>	<b>BROADCAST SEEDING RATE (aerial or broadcast with no incorporation) **</b>
Annual Ryegrass	8/15 – 10/31	15 lbs/ac	19.5 lbs/ac
Cereal Rye	9/1 – 10/31	100 lbs/ac	130 lbs/ac
Wheat ***	9/1 – 10/31	100 lbs/ac	130 lbs/ac
Triticale	9/1 – 10/31	100 lbs/ac	130 lbs/ac
Barley	9/1 – 10/31	100 lbs/ac	130 lbs/ac
Spring Oats	9/1 – 10/15	90 lbs/ac	117 lbs/ac
Radish/Turnip ****	8/15 – 10/1	8 lbs/ac	10.4 lbs/ac
Crimson Clover	8/15 – 10/15	15 lbs/ac	19.5 lbs/ac
Forage Radish & Annual Ryegrass ****	8/15 – 10/1	2 lbs/ac forage radish 15 lbs/ac annual ryegrass	2.6 lbs/ac forage radish 19.5 lbs/ac annual ryegrass
Crimson Clover & Cereal Rye	8/15 – 10/15	10 lbs/ac clover 40 lbs/ac rye	13 lbs/ac clover 52 lbs/ac rye
Hairy Vetch & Cereal Rye	8/15 – 10/15	20 lbs/ac vetch 40 lbs/ac rye	26 lbs/ac vetch 52 lbs/ac rye

\* Other seedings may be approved before planting by NRCS or NCCD planner or Extension Agent

\*\* For soybean acres, aerial seeding must occur before leaf drop.

\*\*\* For small grains, the Hessian Fly (fly-free) date for New Castle County is October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

\*\*\*\* No radishes into double cropped soybeans.

- ❖ Establishment of cover crops must be done according to NRCS standard and specification for this practice. Seed will be incorporated ((drilled, no-tilled, lightly incorporated (disked or vertical tillage)) or broadcast seeded (aerial or broadcast with no incorporation).
- ❖ Application of commercial fertilizers or animal manures are **NOT** allowed on a field that is intended to receive or is receiving cover crop incentive payments. In the case of a hardship, manure may be allowed to be applied to enrolled land in the fall only after receiving approval from the New Castle Conservation District Board of Supervisors or their designee. If the cover crop has not already been planted, it must be planted within 7 days of manure application. Examples of hardships might include heavy rains that fill to capacity or overflow a liquid manure storage structure or diseased poultry litter that must be removed from the house immediately. The poultry integrator must provide certification of diseased litter. The Board of Supervisors has the right to approve or disapprove such requests. Commercial fertilizer or animal manure applications may be done according to a nutrient management plan after March 1st.
- ❖ Grazing of cover crops is permitted within the following guidelines:
  - (a) Farmer must notify the District, in writing, 2 weeks prior to grazing livestock. Fields and the number of animals per acre intended for grazing must be identified. The District reserves the right to deny a grazing request based on poor crop establishment, too many animals per acre, or other factors that may apply.
  - (b) Prior to grazing, the cover crop must be well established. Under optimal conditions, grazing can commence 6 to 8 weeks after planting (+/- 80% cover) and after the two-week written notification has been submitted.
  - (c) The District reserves the right to deny a grazing request based on poor crop establishment, too many animals per acre, or other conditions that may apply.
  - (d) Green chopping is permitted (for on farm use only).
- ❖ Fields will be spot checked for planting in the fall and before the final payment in the spring.
- ❖ Receipts for aerially application must be provided before payment. Seed tags/seed test results for germination rates are needed prior to payment. Homegrown seed will need to be tested prior to planting for >80% germination, purity, and free of noxious weeds by a Delaware or Maryland seed laboratory. Cost-share for seed testing is provided at 50% (up to \$15).
- ❖ Participants will self-certify in writing by Nov. 11, 2022 which tracts and fields have been planted and the date and rate planted prior to receiving the initial \$40 per acre cost-share payment (an additional \$5 per acre if aerial seeded). An additional \$20 will be made after the participant certifies that the cover crop has been destroyed. Harvested cover crops only receive the initial \$40 payment. For CSP and any EQIP contracts, duplicate fields cannot be co-cost shared. For 2018 and newer CSP contract's, tracts cannot be co-cost shared.
- ❖ Unharvested cover crops must be destroyed on or after March 15th but before June 1<sup>st</sup>. Cover crops may be destroyed by herbicide or plowing, except for highly erodible cropland (HEL). All designated HEL cropland must retain 30% surface crop residues following spring planting.
- ❖ Exceptions to planting dates maybe made for specialty crops such as pumpkins. Exceptions for destruction dates may be made for specialty crops such as peas.
- ❖ Farmers will self-certify destruction or harvest of cover crops on the "Cover Crop Program Certification" form. This form will be mailed to the applicant around March 1<sup>st</sup> and must be reported by June 15<sup>th</sup>.