

USDA Programs to promote Cover Crops

Iowa USDA Programs

USDA Programs

- **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)**
- **EQIP - Organic Initiative**
- **EQIP SCI/STIR Pilot**
- **Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative (MRBI)**
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**

Statewide Funding levels

- **EQIP – General**
- EQIP - Organic Initiative
- **EQIP SCI/STIR Pilot**
- **Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative (MRBI)**
- **CSP Supplemental Payment**

EQIP 2010 Signup

- **Cover Crop Practice Scenarios**
 - EQIP 50% estimated practice payment
 - EQIP 75% estimated practice payment
 - Organic 75% estimated practice payment
 - Organic HU 90% estimated practice payment
 - HU - Historic Underserved (limited resource, tribal, socially disadvantage etc)

EQIP 2010 General Signup

- **Cover Crop Practice 340**
- **Four Practice scenarios**
 - **Cover crop - nonwinter hardy**
 - **Cover crop - winter hardy**
 - **Cover crop - living mulch**
 - **Cover crop - summer construction**
- **Program Payment is 50%**
- **Program Payment for Historic Underserved is 75%**

EQIP 2010 Organic Signup

- **Three Practice scenarios**
 - **Cover crop - nonwinter hardy**
 - **Cover crop - winter hardy**
 - **Cover crop - living mulch**
- **Program Payment is 75%**
- **Program Payment for Historic Underserved is 90%**

EQIP 2010 General Signup

- **Cover Crop Practice Scenarios**

Scenario	EQIP	EQIP-HU	Organic	Organic-HU
nonwinter hardy	\$41.25	\$61.88	~ 75%	~ 90%
winter hardy	\$60.03	\$108.19	~ 75%	~ 90%
living mulch	\$56.18	\$102.41	~ 75%	~ 90%
summer construction	\$195	\$201		

* Note Organic rates have not been approved by National Office at this time.

Organic Initiative Practices

Practice Code	Practice Name
316	Animal Mortality Facility
317	Composting Facility
328	Conservation Crop Rotation (eligible only when establishing new acres of a rotation that includes perennial vegetation)
138	Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition
330	Contour Farming
332	Contour Buffer Strips
340	Cover Crop
342	Critical Area Planting
382	Fence
386	Field Border
511	Forage Harvest Management
561	Heavy Use Protection Area

EQIP Soil Quality SCI/STIR Initiative

- EQIP Pilot project to promote more detail planning through the use of:
 - SCI – Soil Conditioning Index and
 - STIR – Soil Tillage Intensity Rating
- Available in 6 Iowa counties
Plymouth, Pocahontas, Buena Vista, Wright,
Franklin, Butler

SCI/STIR Pilot

- Intent of the Pilot is to encourage participants to improve their SCI score and reduce their STIR rating by combining practices into a complete cropping system.

EQIP Soil Quality Incentive Payment Rates

Table 1

SCI SCORE	STIR RATING	INCENTIVE PAYMENT
SCI increase by 0.2 or more to minimum SCI score 0.2	STIR < 30	\$10/ac up to 320 acres
SCI increased by 0.2 or more to minimum SCI score of 0.5	STIR < 15	\$25/ac up to 320 acres
SCI increase by 0.2 or more to above 0.7 min SCI score	STIR < 10	\$35/ac up to 320

SCI/STIR Pilot

- The 2010 ranking criteria favors multi-practices such as Strip-till and cover crops.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative

- New Initiative to improve WQ in the Mississippi River Basin
- Implement mgmt practices **Prevent, Control, Trap** nutrient runoff
- \$320 million over 4 years (\$80 M/yr)
- Cover Crop play a big role!

Mississippi River Basin Initiative

- 5 watersheds in Iowa Selected
 - Boone
 - Maquoketa
 - North Raccoon
 - Upper Cedar (shared with MN)
 - Lower Grand (shared with MO)

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- Resource - Conserving Crop Rotation
 - Crop rotation that includes at least one resource conserving crop and reduces wind and water erosion, increase soil OM, improves fertility and tilth, interrupts pest cycles, reduces depletion of soil moisture, habitat for pollinators

Conservation Stewardship Program

- Supplemental Payment Activity
 - Resource Conserving Crop Rotation
 - A perennial grass, legume or both
 - A high residue crop
 - A cover crop immediately following annual crop
 - Minimum of 2 crops, if no perennial, with a cover crop (not harvested) following one of the crop yrs

Cover Crop Adoption

- Improving soil quality
- Increase in nutrient availability
- Hold Nutrient in the root zone
- In No-till systems opportunity to correct
 - compaction
 - Mixing nutrient
- Use as supplemental forage

Questions/ Comments

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