

Early Harvest Cover Crops

Thinking about planting cover crops after wheat?

Cover crops after wheat provide many benefits such as preventing erosion, improving soil health and productivity, and suppressing weeds.

How to get started with cover crops after winter wheat:

1. Bale off straw or ensure straw and chaff are evenly spread
2. Removing weeds and volunteer wheat allows the cover crop to get a good start
3. Consider your wheat herbicide program when selecting a cover crop
4. Plant as soon as possible after wheat harvest
5. Drill, broadcast or incorporate cover crop seed to get faster results
(see seeding rate chart on reverse).

Cover Crop Seeding Rate Chart

Early harvested crops like wheat offer a significant growing period for cover crops. Keep it simple with oats or build diversity with seed mixtures. Adjust seeding rates based on intended use (e.g. higher rates for feed purposes). Available options include (but not limited to):

Cover Crop	Seeding Rate	Goal	Control	Comments
Oats (or barley)	20 to 50 kg/ha	Cover, soil building	Winterkills, tillage, herbicide	Broadcast or drill
	80 to 100 (100-125) kg/ha	Feed		
Oats and peas	30 to 50 kg/ha	Cover, soil building	Winterkills, tillage, herbicide	Drill – peas need soil contact
	80 to 100 kg/ha oats and 50 to 75 kg/ha peas	Feed		
Oats and radish	25 to 40 kg/ha	Cover, soil building	Winterkills, tillage, herbicide	Broadcast or drill Keep radish rates at 1-3 kg/ha or less
Winter cereals (e.g. rye, wheat, triticale)	40 to 60 kg/ha	Cover, soil building	Tillage, herbicide	Will overwinter
	60 to 120 kg/ha	Feed		
Multi mix – 3 or more species (grass, legume, broadleaf)	25 to 50 kg/ha + depending on species	Cover, soil building Diversity	Tillage, herbicide	May overwinter May support pollinators if flowering

Note: Volunteer wheat is inconsistent as a cover crop

For more information:

Visit: ontario.ca/covercrops

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