Ontario Cover Crops Strategy

2017 ONTARIO COVER CROPS STEERING COMMITTEE

This project is the result of the shared investment of all members of the Ontario Cover Crops Steering Committee, and represents their commitment to the importance of implementing a provincial cover crops strategy. Our sincere appreciation to the members of the Steering Committee and their organizations for their contribution, insights and leadership in the creation of this Strategy. It will continue to evolve in response to changing topics and expectations.

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• This Strategy is intended to be widely communicated and permission is granted to share any of it with credit to the “Ontario Cover Crops Strategy”. 
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Cover crops are considered a fundamental aspect of any sustainable cropping system due to their ability to protect and enhance soils. However, their benefits extend beyond soil health. Increasing the adoption of cover crops plays an important role in stabilizing soil during the non-growing season, and helps to reduce the risk of erosion and nutrient loss.

The benefits of cover crops seem clear, but questions and challenges remain as farmers at different scales of operation try to maximize those benefits, given the limitations of time and equipment. Balancing soil building and fertility management with the demands of planting and harvesting can be challenging. Farmers may feel they lack enough land to develop adequate cover crop rotations, and anecdotal evidence about cover crops reducing weed, insect and disease pressure may not be backed by research in their region.

This Ontario Cover Crops Strategy was developed by the Ontario Cover Crops Steering Committee to generate momentum across the province for the adoption of cover crops, especially during the non-growing season. Outreach and education efforts outlined in this Strategy will help promote cover crops as an important practice to build soil health and improve water quality, create awareness of the practice, and provide information that helps farmers understand how to use cover crops within their production system.

Through a series of discussions with agricultural industry partner organizations (Ontario Certified Crop Advisor Association, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario, Ontario Agri-Business Association, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association, OMAFRA, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority), targets were developed to promote the increased adoption of cover crops.

This Strategy addresses four areas of actions for these industry partners to take related to:

1. Research
2. Policy and programs
3. Communication, and

It outlines the roles and responsibilities for the partners in implementing the plan, including actions to take in supporting this industry-led Strategy. These actions are designed to assist farmers in integrating cover crops in their farming systems, and to address the barriers which may require research and policy interventions.
This Strategy identifies the key actions, communication plans and tactics for all Steering Committee members and their sponsoring organizations. It provides a tool for all organizations and individuals working to improve cover crop adoption.

Increasingly, farmers are using cover crops because of the benefits they provide to soil and crop management systems. Still, only a small percentage of available cropland is planted to cover crops. This Ontario Cover Crops Strategy defines opportunities for increasing cover crop acreage in Ontario and provides a guiding strategy to increase adoption across the province.

The Strategy was developed by the Ontario Cover Crops Steering Committee, made up of organizations and individuals who are committed to increasing cover crop adoption.

There are four areas of focus:

1. Targeting research to farmer needs
2. Influencing public policy and programs targeting cover crops
3. Improving the messaging and outreach related to cover crops, and
4. Encouraging and supporting champions.

The goal of the Strategy is to build awareness and knowledge of the benefits of cover crops and how they can solve existing problems, and to encourage adoption of the practice on farms across Ontario. The Strategy is designed to leverage existing information and resources, and complements other ongoing efforts by numerous agricultural organizations in Ontario.

**What are Cover Crops?**

Cover crops are plants seeded into agricultural fields, either within or outside of the regular growing season, with the primary purpose of improving or maintaining soil quality. They are non-commodity crops either inter-seeded into living crops or planted onto bare fields or crop stubble during fallow periods. They have been used for centuries to cover and protect the soil from water and wind erosion, add organic matter, reduce nutrient losses, improve soil fertility, reduce pest populations, reduce compaction, improve soil structure, and protect crops from rapid changes in temperature and moisture.
1. Research

Lack of easily applicable information is a common barrier to practice adoption. Many farmers base agronomic decisions on research data from trials that replicate or closely mimic their own cropping practices and/or crop rotations within their region. Further research on improved varieties, planting to minimize interference with fall harvest and spring management techniques will aid farmers in adopting the practice.

Policy makers also rely on research data to develop incentives and risk management tools. Research into environmental benefits, impact of cover crops and related best management practices help make the case for increasing financial support under farm programs. Enhanced research will provide better data and information that can be used by policy makers to develop more relevant policies and programs.

**Research Target Areas:**
- Adapting to local geography and climate
- Determining soil health effects
- Applying BMPs for integration
- Evaluating crop varieties and mixes
- Determining nutrient availability during the growing season
- Developing varieties that reduce timing barriers
- Quantifying economic benefits
- Addressing environmental issues
- Water quality (phosphorous reduction, soil erosion)
- Pollinator health
- Greenhouse gas, climate change

**Barriers for Producers:**
- Lack of easily applicable information from research data that replicates farmer's own practice and specific region (soil, geography, rotation, planting practices)
- Lack of information on management practices, nutrient benefits, environmental benefits, and finding time to work a cover crop into the rotation

**Enablers:**
- Research that targets local conditions, better varieties and mixes of cover crops, and provides simple models of nutrient benefits for farmers
- Enhanced knowledge transfer activities (presentations, outreach)
- Economic analysis/cost benefit studies
- On-farm data linking cover crops to crop performance
Research Priorities

- Jointly identify and prioritize key research areas to be considered for funding and share that information with all funding organizations
- Seek additional support to increase local/regional research funding to assess fit for local conditions

Information Dissemination

- Build data related to species evaluation, crop synergies, timing of planting and terminating or incorporating, soil health effects, and economic benefits, and share with farmers
- Enhance knowledge transfer activities from research trials
- Engage farmers in on-farm trials
- Engage Certified Crop Advisors in disseminating research results (e.g. workshops, Continuing Education Credits)

Long-Term Planning

- Explore feasibility of learning farms or demonstration farms
- Engage a provincial cover crops research coordinator to initiate targeted research and avoid duplication of effort, as well as disseminate research results to farmers and policy makers
- Collect baseline data for benchmarking and evaluation

Researcher

Dr. Laura Van Eerd has been doing cover crop research at the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus since 2004. Her main focus is on the soil health and nitrogen retention benefits of cover crops, but her findings have shown that cover crops can boost yields as well.

Dr. Van Eerd was part of a team of experts from Ontario that worked with the Midwest Cover Crops Council to create a Cover Crop Decision Tool for Eastern Canada. The tool is designed to assist farmers in selecting cover crops based on their soil type, heat units and needs (e.g. soil builder, weed fighter, nitrogen scavenger, erosion control).

She feels that farmers intuitively know that cover crops can be valuable, but that “seeing is believing”; the key to getting farmers to adopt the practice is by providing opportunities to meet with researchers and growers, and hosting open houses to show off the long-term benefits of cover crops. Her experience has been that once the benefits are demonstrated, farmers are keen to adapt their equipment and cropping practices to facilitate cover crop usage.

Audience:

Organizations that fund research
Government funders
Agribusiness
Policy makers

Universities
Researchers
Farm partners
Conservation Authorities
Research Highlights in Ontario

Farm Organizations:

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) - Library stores research protocols and reports from the Farmer-led Research Program; data from trials; and links to relevant projects https://efao.ca/research-library/

Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO) - Centralized database of research projects that have been approved for funding is publicly accessible at http://gfo.ca/Research/Projects

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) - Identify leading-edge research and priorities to direct what research efforts should target http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/research-resources/research-projects/
CROP Advances - Summary reports from OMAFRA field crop team and staff http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/research-resources/crop-advances/

Ontario Soil Management Research and Services Committee (OSMRSC) - Reports research information and co-ordination of research efforts on soil management practices in Ontario, representing government, universities, industry, laboratories and farm organizations.

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2. Policy and Programs

Public policy can play a key role in promoting cover crop adoption as part of a systems approach by providing outreach, funding for incentives to help encourage adoption, technical assistance, and research.

Federal and provincial funding incentives are available through various cost-share programs, including Conservation Authority programs, to implement BMPs that will help achieve measurable improvements in soil health and water quality.

Public policies can also serve as barriers to cover crops adoption. A lack of knowledge about the benefits, practices and on-farm challenges of cover crops among policy makers can result in poorly designed policies and unintentional barriers. As well, lack of baseline data can prevent decision makers from determining the effect of increased use to inform policy. Accurate data tracking of increases in adoption will support policies and actions and help measure longer term environmental effects.

On-farm adoption can be negatively impacted by the perception that crop insurance policies restrict use or by having cost-share programs with limiting criteria (e.g. geography, level of adoption) or complex paperwork burdens. As well, early adopters encourage other farmers to use cover crops by demonstrating their benefits, and should be allowed to take advantage of financial incentives for assuming the risk in experimenting with the practice.

**Barriers for Farmers:**
- Perceived and actual impact on crop insurance
- Restrictive cost-share program policy
- Timing of program deadlines in cropping season; paperwork burden
- Lack of information about available programs

**Enablers:**
- Improved funding programs that include incentives, cost-share
- Improved risk management programs that address adoption of best management practices
- Agreements with farmers that address program length, timing of program parameters, deadlines, accounting rules, paperwork burden
Policy Priorities

- Recognize policy and programs related to cover crops as high priority and begin discussion with government departments
- Continue to dialogue with the respective commodity Boards to support opportunities related to cover crops
- Establish baseline data and tracking metrics for cover crops to be used going forward (e.g. number of acres planted, satellite imagery, etc.)
- Encourage policy/program design to mitigate risk, allow experimentation on small areas and increase adoption of Best Management Practices (BMP)
- Encourage policies and programs that allow flexible dates (establishment and termination), support longer term practice and reduce paperwork barriers
- Create incentives that reward all adopters
- Fund farmer-to-farmer initiatives and increase farmer-to-farmer education by funding dissemination programs and research that involves on-farm trials

Information Dissemination

- Provide policy makers with scientific data/information about benefits and barriers to adoption/use to help shape policy that encourages wider adoption
- Educate all levels of government, watershed organizations, etc. about the benefits of cover crops to help develop further educational outreach to farmers

Long-Term Planning

- Integrate policy/programs with climate, source water protection and phosphorous initiatives
- Recognize the climate change benefits of cover crops in helping to store water during heavy rainfall events, decrease nitrate loading from tile drained systems, build resiliency during extremely dry weather, and sequester carbon
- Streamline program delivery for flexibility and timing parameters

Audience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy makers; government leaders</th>
<th>Bi-national water groups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OMAFRA</td>
<td>Cost-share programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOECC</td>
<td>Stewardship Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAFC</td>
<td>Consumers/public</td>
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<tr>
<td>AgriCorp</td>
<td>Conservation Authorities</td>
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</table>
3. Sharing the Message

Conversations spread adoption. Adopting something new involves managing risk and uncertainty. People we know and trust who have successfully adopted an innovation give reassurances that attempts to change won’t result in embarrassment, financial loss or wasted time. Advertising and media stories spread information about new innovations, but face-to-face communication is essential to adoption. Successful messaging includes peer networks and uses well-respected individuals to spread new ideas through their own social networks.

**Barriers to Adoption:**

Knowledge Transfer
- Lack of locally applicable knowledge (e.g. varieties)
- Uncertainty, perceived risk, need to learn
- Lack of trusted local source of management information

Communication
- Inaccurate or conflicting information
- Farming partners (e.g. ag lenders, rural landowners) unfamiliar with cover crops
- Visual perception of farms does not include cover crops (aesthetics, local norms, media portrayal)

Perceived Farm Management Challenges
- Interference with rotation, risk of pathogens, termination issues, moisture concerns
- Larger farms may not be as adaptable during spring planting or fall harvest seasons
- Economic considerations (cost/benefit, capital costs, equipment, labour, inputs, future prices)

**Enablers:**

- Learning opportunities on a micro scale so new practices can be adapted to local conditions
- Easily accessible resource library to quickly help find information and research data
- Decision framework on how to optimally manage cover crops, including use of Cover Crop Decision Tool
- Crop Input retailers (OABA) and CCAs provide valuable information as part of professional relationship
- Common message on cover crops identify the benefits and address the most prevalent management concerns
- Informed landlords encourage adoption on leased/rented farmland
Communication Priorities

- Create a communication strategy that targets multiple audiences and includes a social media/web strategy, for regular flow of consistent information to key stakeholders
- Create single source information portal (website), kept current with information from all partners but independent from any group
- Provide simple, easy-to-follow information with a strong, common message on the impact of cover crops (short, concise statements on the agronomic, economic, and environmental value)
- Create a photo library that can be used by media, organizations and the general public
- Increase the visual exposure of cover crops as a normal farm practice

Information Dissemination:

Targeting Farmers

- Communicate to farmers through on-farm demonstration projects targeting management, inputs, varieties
- Showcase local successes and early adopters through field days (see and touch first hand)
- Support peer-to-peer events (tailgate meetings, coffee breaks)
- Provide simple, easy-to-follow technical information (how to start, terminate, etc)
- Promote the use of the Cover Crop Decision Tool
- Address cover crops as a solution to a recognized problem (e.g. decreased organic matter)
- Encourage all farm organizations to regularly communicate about cover crops to their membership through their normal channels
- Demonstrate the value of cover crops and transfer knowledge on how to adopt them on farm by incorporating via 4R’s (Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place)
- Promote cover crops as a recognized Best Management Practice
- Address inaccurate information

Defining the Message

Cover Crops on the Farm

- Improve soil health, build resilient soil and improve soil quality
- Increase soil organic matter and water holding capacity
- Reduce erosion
- Reduce/rehabilitate compaction
- Encourage beneficial microbes
- Help retain nutrients
- Add nitrogen through fixation (leguminous cover crops)
- Help combat weeds and pests
- Break disease cycles
- Reduce inputs

Cover Crops in the Environment

- Enhance biodiversity
- Increase soil infiltration, leading to less flooding, leaching, erosion and runoff
- Create wildlife habitat
- Create pollinator friendly environment and attract beneficial insects
- May sequester carbon; reduce emissions of greenhouse gases

Providing Social Benefits

- Promote plant and animal health
- Enhance water quality
- Promote healthy, productive soil with continued capacity to function as a vital living system
- Educate rural landowners about benefits (soil health, reduced erosion, phosphorous reduction, environmental benefits)
Targeting Advisors and Retailers
- Provide training and technical support for ag retailers and crop advisors to encourage adoption as a normal practice
- Equip agribusiness networks with information to help farmers manage cover crops (seed dealers, crop advisers, custom operators, etc.)
- Encourage cover crop workshops for CCAs with continuing education credits for attending

Targeting Policy Makers
- Increase awareness of cover crops as a tool to address initiatives such as phosphorous reduction, source water protection, soil erosion, water quality, pollinator health, greenhouse gas reduction, climate change
- Provide straightforward information to improve awareness of farming practices such as timing, crop life cycles, etc.
- Support adoption of longer-term practice
- Organize bus tours of area farms promoting awareness of BMPs addressing phosphorous, source water protection, and climate change

Targeting a Broader Audience
- Engage farm writers and media; promote regular articles in print and web-based media; provide updates on soil health practices; invite to tours, demo days
- Create a photo library by collecting high quality current photos on soil health/cover crops
- Influence conference organizers to include speakers/sessions related to cover crops
- Create awareness of the environmental benefits of cover crops for general public focused on stewardship, soil health and sustainable agricultural practices
- Develop and circulate generic factsheets under the Steering Committee logo/brand to be used by all participating organizations
- Support the Ontario Soil Network initiative

Meet a Cover Crop Champion
Laurent Van Arkel has a simple goal on his farm - to improve soil health by having living roots growing 365 days a year. To meet this goal, he has spent many years developing and promoting innovative cover crop techniques and equipment, and regularly shares what he has learned by hosting visitors to his farm and making presentations across North America.

Despite his advocacy of cover crops, he is aware of their challenges. Finding the right variety of seed for the soil type, timing and method of planting, seeding rates, and unpredictable weather conditions all influence the success or failure of cover crops.

Van Arkel hopes that by targeting research to farmers’ needs, these risks can be mitigated and lead to more people using cover crops on their farms.
Use existing communication tools
- Continue to provide cover crop messages with farm organization tours, meetings, webinars, newsletters, social media etc.
- Share information
  - Print factsheets/postcards with common, easy to read, simple to follow information (technical, environmental and economic) under the Ontario Cover Crops Strategy logo for distribution from all partners
  - Encourage distribution through crop input and equipment suppliers, agronomists, CCAs
  - Encourage training and information sharing about cover crop use to agribusiness staff, post-secondary students, ag lenders, CCAs

Top Three Information Sources
1. Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide: help you effectively select, grow, and use cover crops in your farming systems
   http://mccc.msu.edu/other-resources/
2. Midwest Cover Crops Council website: planting, equipment, management, termination, species, other resources
   http://mccc.msu.edu/getting-started/
3. SARE –Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education website: Learning Center (books, bulletins, videos, curricula, fact sheets)
   http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/

The Cover Crop Decision Tool
- A web-based system to assist Ontario farmers in selecting cover crops to include in field crop and vegetable rotations.
http://decision-tool.incovercrops.ca/

Audience:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers/producers</th>
<th>Landlords/renters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm writers; media</td>
<td>Equipment suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom operators</td>
<td>Certified Crop Advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agronomists</td>
<td>Agribusiness (OABA): Co-ops, suppliers, seed dealers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm organizations</td>
<td>Agricultural lenders (banks, credit unions, FCC)</td>
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<td>General public and specific groups (e.g. Lake Erie citizens)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-secondary educators (University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus, Trent University, Durham College)</td>
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4. Champions

Adoption of cover crops is often greatly enhanced in a region by highly successful and innovative farmers, or “champions”, with a passion for sharing the secrets to their success with others. Cover crop adoption increases in geographic areas surrounding cover crop champions because the initial presence of these early adopters results in access to infrastructure, equipment and knowledge that make the tools more accessible for other farmers.

Engage Champions

- Encourage champions to broadcast the message and engage their peers in a personal and trusted way
- Partner with like-minded groups to spread the message and to undertake collaborative or complimentary efforts

Barriers for Champions:

- Time commitment
- Cost to travel and be away from the farm
- Skill set, ability to engage audience

Enablers:

- Farmers learn from the experience and knowledge of their peers
- Peer-to-peer interactions catalyze change in the region
- Financial support allows champions to share their stories to a broader audience
- Access to downloadable presentations and event templates
Information Dissemination

Farmer to Farmer

• Plan and provide direction for the establishment of local cover crop farmer-to-farmer knowledge networks using champion support groups (e.g. Cover Crops Anonymous)
• Endorse, encourage and enable support groups (e.g. bring two farmer neighbours to each group)
• Showcase successes in the farm/local media
• Promote plot tours in farmers’ fields or research plots to increase local engagement
• Provide funding assistance for champions to cover expenses

Broader Agricultural Sector

• Set up a soil health speakers database using the designated website
• Host a series of cover crop workshops (cover crops roadshow); create speaker training notes
• Provide funding and travel assistance for speaking done by champions and/or extension work
• Transfer knowledge on how to adopt cover crops on farm by incorporating via 4Rs
• Provide funding for national, international champion interaction
• Endorse/support Ontario Soil Network Leadership initiative
• Support CCA program related to cover crops

Advice from farmers

Keep it simple and be patient. Don’t expect everything to work perfectly the first time.

Start small, with something like oats after wheat harvest.

Ask other farmers for advice, and spend time evaluating what’s happening in your field.

Pick the right cover for the right purpose.

Audience:

Farmers/producers
Stewardship Councils, Conservation Authorities
Farm organizations
Policymakers
Certified Crop Advisors, dealers, suppliers
Lake Erie citizens/general public
Actions to Meet Goals

Two Year Objectives:

Research

1. Prioritize applied research needs that address the common challenges farmers face in cover crop adoption (varieties, mixes, models for nutrient benefits, timing barriers for planting and termination)

2. Develop a baseline measurement tool to gather data on current adoption of cover crops

3. Advocate for cover crop research funding that supports partnerships between research institutions and farmers, including increasing opportunities for on-farm trials and farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing

Meet a Cover Crop Champion

Blair Scott, a 2008 University of Guelph grad, wears several hats - Certified Crop Advisor, partner at Sprucedale Agromart, and cash crop farmer. Through these roles, he has seen first-hand the value of cover crops in improving soil health. With the climate becoming more variable, fluctuating between very dry to excessive rainfall, Scott believes cover crops play a huge role in making our cropping systems more resilient to withstand such extreme situations.

Scott has been fortunate to work with many progressive farmers who are on the leading edge of cover crop adoption. He tries to share his experiences both as a crop advisor and farmer to help farmers get started with cover crops. He feels that cover crop promotion and understanding has increased in Ontario over the past few years through educational programs and OSCIA initiatives. He is confident that we can build on that momentum by encouraging early adopters to share their challenges and successes, and by continuing research into cover crops at both the farmer and academic level.
Policy and Programs

1. Inform policy makers and program staff about the on-farm challenges faced by farmers, including first-hand information through on-farm visits
2. Work with government and other funders to ensure the administration of programs encourages participation by farmers (e.g. flexible planting and termination dates)
3. Recommend that funding programs support farmers who already plant cover crops to continue to plant them on a larger percentage of their acres
4. Link funding model to on-farm data collection from participants to enhance baseline information

Communication

1. Develop a communication strategy with consistent messaging that involves all Steering Committee partner organizations in outreach to their membership and beyond, including:
   - Supporting agribusiness retail sector to provide effective communications with growers about cover crops as a solution to existing problems, and to serve as reliable advisors
   - Engaging farm media to encourage regular articles and the use of appropriate photos
   - Sharing a common message for the farming and non-farming audience: stewardship, soil health, environmental benefits
2. Create a web portal independent of any one organization as a one-stop place for good, reliable information on cover crops in Ontario, with an owner to manage all information under Ontario Cover Crops Strategy (OCCS) branding and keep it current, including:
   - Information to increase awareness about cover crops as both an environmental and economical tool and as a solution to existing problems
   - A comprehensive database of all program funding and opportunities available to farmers as a single point of information to assist with the transition
   - An easily accessible photo library with high quality images that are publicly available
   - A speakers list, accessible for easy searching
3. Create a strategy for outreach activities including:
   - Influencing conference organizers to include speakers/sessions on cover crops and benefits
   - Promoting cover crop workshops for CCAs with continuing education credits for attending
   - Developing and circulating items such as generic factsheets using the OCCS logo/brand
• Educating policy makers and program staff about the on-farm challenges faced by farmers, through information, on-farm visits, etc.
• Developing talking points to provide question and answers on adoption of cover crops

Champions

1. Source funding support for champions to cover expenses incurred in promoting cover crop adoption (i.e. travel expenses)
2. Support funding for Ontario Soil Network Leadership initiative to continue
3. Have downloadable presentation and events templates available on the web portal for use by speakers and champions

Motivations

- Increased soil health
- Increased soil organic matter
- Reduced soil erosion

Cover Crop Adoption

Challenges

- Establishment
- Time and labour to manage
- Right species
Five Year Outcomes

Research

1. Soil health is understood as a valuable asset
2. Baseline data measurement tool is used to keep data current
3. Applied research priorities address the main challenges farmers face in adoption (varieties, mixes, models for nutrient benefits, timing barriers for planting and termination) and a strong connection exists between research and farmer needs
4. Demonstration farms are an integral part of the information technology transfer and support partnerships between research institutions and farmers
5. Technology and equipment are available that address advancements in research

Policy and Programs

1. Public policies and programs facilitate adoption by addressing barriers and providing solutions
2. Program delivery is streamlined for flexibility and timing parameters
3. Public policy and programs are integrated with climate, source water protection and phosphorous initiatives

Communication

1. Cover crops are a recognized Best Management Practice leading to an increase in number of acres under cover
2. Communication strategy is in place with consistent messaging, involving all Steering Committee partner organizations in outreach activities
3. Agribusiness retail sector provides effective communications to growers about cover crops as a solution to existing problems, and serves as reliable advisors
4. Web portal is maintained as a one stop place for good, current, reliable information and photos on cover crops in Ontario, under the OCCS branding
5. Generic factsheets are developed using the cover crops logo/brand, and are promoted and circulated by all organizations
6. Soil health initiatives are seen as beneficial to all target audiences, farmers see value in helping people understand what they are doing and a common non-farming message is used, focused on stewardship, soil health, environmental benefits
Champions

1. *Champions continue to network to improve cover crop adoption*
2. *Funding support is available for champions to cover expenses incurred in promoting cover crop adoption*
3. *Tools and templates are available for use by champions*