



Considering Cover Crops after Corn or Soybeans?

New to cover cropping after corn or soybeans? The On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) may help you implement these new practices.

While cover cropping after winter wheat is the most common practice, expanding to other points in your rotation can provide additional benefits. The OFCAF cost-share program provides an opportunity to support producers introducing cover crops after corn or soybeans, stages in crop rotation that previously may not have included them.

Cover Cropping After Soybeans or Corn: Key Considerations

After Soybeans and Silage Corn

Soybeans leave relatively light residue, making fields more exposed and generally easier for establishing a cover crop. For silage corn, cover cropping options are similar to soybeans, as harvest times occur within the same timeframe.

Suitable cover crop options after soy or silage corn include:

- **Cereal rye:** Most common and dependable overwintering cover crops due to its ability to germinate in cool fall temperatures.
- **Cover crop mixes including rye:** Seed companies have cover crop mixes available that include rye with other species such as hairy vetch and crimson clover, adding nitrogen fixers to the soil.
- **Clover mixtures:** Can be inter-seeded if planted early enough in the fall (mid to late September).

After Grain Corn

The later harvest timing for grain corn limits cover crop options because weather conditions are often too cold for most plants to germinate.

- If weather and soil conditions allow for seeding after harvest, cereal rye may be the best cover cropping option because it can germinate late in the season.
- Inter-seeding a cover crop mix during the V4 to V5 growth stage for corn allows for more time for cover crop establishment. Available mixes to inter-seed into standing corn will contain species such as rye, crimson clover and others.

Establishment Guidelines for Late Fall Seeding of Rye:

- Plant as soon as possible after harvest; ideally within two weeks before the average hard frost date (approximately -2°C).
- If seeding after mid-October, increase the seeding rate, typically doubling it, for better germination success.

**READY TO TRY
COVER CROPS
AFTER CORN OR
SOYBEANS?**

Introducing cover crops to new parts of your rotation may qualify for OFCAF support. For more information, consult the program guide.

