



**THE INFORMATION
YOU NEED TO
MAKE COVER
CROPS PART OF
YOUR ROUTINE**

Soil First
PREMIUM
COVER CROP SEED



10 Steps for Successful Cover Cropping

While cover crops won't be seeded for several months, the cover crop key decision season is upon us. Make sure you keep these steps in mind to ensure success:

1. Have a Goal. Ask: "What do I want to accomplish by planting a cover crop and what benefits do I want to work toward?"
2. Select the Right Cover Crops to reach your goals. There are many species on the market and each has a distinct set of characteristics to achieve different outcomes. Wrong choices lead to more problems.
3. Have a Plan. Think about changes that may be needed to your current farming system to allow for correct establishment (and management):
 - Modifying crop rotation (perhaps adding another crop to your rotation creates a wider window in fall)
 - Altering previous crop's harvest slightly for more timing flexibility
 - Adjusting herbicide program for timely cover crop seeding
 - Additional pass in fall and/or spring for planting and spring termination



4. Select a Field or Areas of Your Farm that will benefit most from a cover crop.
5. Think Small Acres starting out. Consider new management concepts needed when first trying cover crops.
6. Get Seed Ordered Soon. It may take longer than you think for less-traditional seed to arrive. Good, clean seed is the most demanded too (seed, not grain. Seed is professionally grown and maintained for good quality and germination).
7. Allocate Labor and Equipment. Depending on your seeding plan, you may need extra help for prompt seeding after cash crop harvest. If the plan includes custom seeding, communicate plans early to ensure timely application.
8. Consider Leaving a Check Strip for Comparison. How better to determine progress than by seeing uncovered ground side-by-side?
9. Balance Goals and Spring Management Wisely. Even the perfect cover crop not managed or terminated correctly in spring can lead to setbacks for your subsequent cash crop.
10. Make a Commitment. Some goals are easily noticed and well defined, but improving soil health is a journey, not a destination. It takes time to regenerate soil and demands producers consider long term expectations, no matter the initial goal or objective. Remove cattle from pasture before clover seedlings emerge, but bring back to graze down the grasses when grass is 8-12" high. This should be a flash grazing so the clover is just below the level of grazing. You may lose some clover, but the few seedlings lost are far less than the number of seedlings that would be lost to competition for light and moisture if the established grasses are not grazed.

About The Dirt

The Dirt is a periodic email series with timely cover crop tips from the agronomic experts at Soil First and La Crosse Seed. If you have a question you'd like us to answer, contact us: info@laxseed.com or 800.356.7333