

## **COV1 Cover Crops**

### **Why is this good for water quality?**

#### **The aim-**

Cover crops are a proven method to protect soils from erosion and reduce overwinter soil erosion, nitrate leaching and runoff. Cover crops also contribute to soil organic matter, improving soil structure, water infiltration and retention.

### **Why is this good for my farm?**

Cover crops offer multiple farm benefits, including enhancing soil health and fertility while reducing the need for synthetic inputs. Cover crops can also suppress weed growth, break pest and disease lifecycles and improve insect biodiversity, which strengthens natural pest control. This helps reduce reliance on pesticides and herbicides, lowering costs and environmental impact.

## **COV1 Cover Crops**

### **Payment Rate: £140/ha/yr**

What mix would be best for the applicant's farming operation and soil type must be discussed with your agricultural advisor. Unlike ISS1 there is no need to include deep rooting plants.

### **Specification**

- The crop must remain in situ until at least January 15th. In some cases crops may be destroyed earlier e.g. if also being used as a biofumigant. However this should be discussed with your Agricultural Advisor. Early grazing by livestock is not permitted.
- Grazing 100% of cover crop biomass is not permitted. Payments will be refused if crops have been destroyed early. Applicants should attempt to- eat 1/3, leave 1/3 and waste 1/3.
- The farm must be following a Nutrient Management Plan that considers the nitrogen returned to the soil from destroyed cover crops and have complete up to date soil analyses for all fields on the farm.
- In non-priority areas; farmers must demonstrate that they are doing their fair share of the option i.e. the majority of the cover crop area grown (in catchment) should be self-funded, this option is designed to increase cover crop areas not fund regular practice.
- The species used within the crop mix are for the farm to decide, however the farm should specify their choice in their application. Following autumn harvested cereals 3 species should be established.
- Following maize or late harvested (After 15th Sept) 1 species providing good coverage is accepted e.g. Westerwolds. Cover crops may be sown into a growing maize crop. Crops should be drilled into a growing crop to give good establishment.
- Fertiliser must not be applied.
- A dense and fast-growing cover crop must be established following or into, your summer or autumn harvested crop and be present over the winter months of your agreement.
- Strip grazing is not permitted
- Stubble turnips are not permitted in surface water catchments
- Seed rates must exceed recommended rate from the supplier
- If chemicals are used to terminate the cover crop only Glyphosate is permitted, mechanical termination is preferred.
- Rotational option with a 2025-2030 agreement period, ha can vary each year
- Applicants are encouraged to indicate the likely hectareage of the option for subsequent years to aid in the assessment of your application. If possible, hectarages should be broadly consistent between years
- Significant changes in the area of the option from that applied for in year 1 are not guaranteed funding and should be first be discussed with your Agricultural advisor.
- Applicants are expected to complete the action in a way that could be reasonably expected to achieve the actions aim.

### **Evidence to apply**

- Representative photos of the target fields when in the previous crop
- Maps of the fields
- Details of the mix and seed rate to be used
- A nutrient management plan or progress towards one
- Soil sample results
- Spreading risk maps

### **Evidence to claim**

- Seed labels and invoices showing the quantity
- Photo of the field when being drilled (preferred)
- Photos of the crop established
- Cropping plans to show total cover crops planned