

JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR · JERRY COSTELLO II, DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IDOA LAUNCHES NEW I-COVER PROGRAM

Applications accepted starting March 3, 2025, with opportunity for pre-enrollment

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) secured a \$7 million USDA grant to launch I-COVER, the Infield Conservation for Operationalizing Vital Ecosystem Resilience Program, which offers cost-share/financial incentives to producers and landowners who are new adopters of cover crops or who utilize new techniques for earlier establishment of cover crops.

The multi-state USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant between Illinois, Indiana and Iowa establishes a three-year program for cover crops planted in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

"Research shows that cover crops improve soil health, reduce erosion, increase drought resistance, and reduce pests, weeds and diseases," said **Jerry Costello II, Illinois Director of Agriculture**. "Illinois is home to some of the most fertile soil in the world, and I encourage farmers to participate in this important new program to conserve and protect it."

Pre-enrollment and applications are available online. Visit the IDOA website at agr.illinois.gov/ and select the I-COVER Program link on the home page.

Pre-Enrollment Opens	8 a.m. CST, Monday, February 10, 2025
Program Opens (Applications can be submitted)	8 a.m. CST, Monday, March 3, 2025
Program Closes	11:59 p.m. CST, Friday, March 14, 2025

The following rates will be available to selected applications for the following practice scenarios for each of the three years of the program. Scenario rates vary based on species number and type.

- \$61.13/acre for one or more cover crop species, winter killed
- \$85.65/acre for single cover crop species, spring terminated
- \$105.40/acre for one or more cover crop species, spring terminated

IDOA will select applications on a first come, first served basis, such that the first application per county will be prioritized, then all remaining applications will be prioritized on a first come, first served basis for qualified and verified applicants. IDOA will verify applications and respective acreage, and local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff will check selected applicants' USDA Farm Bill eligibility, work with applicants on conservation planning, verify practice implementation, and assist with payment and reporting documents. Program viability is subject to availability of federal funds.

A copy of the CCC-902, FSA Subsidiary Report and Producer Farm Data or proof of control of the land will be needed, if the applicant is selected.

Acres must not be currently enrolled in other state, federal or private programs to implement cover crops (e.g. EQIP, CSP, Fall Covers for Spring Savings or any other program that may include state of federal funds) and applicants must have control of the land for the life of the program.

Program viability is subject to availability of federal funds.

For program details, visit the I-COVER Program Rules at agr.illinois.gov/resources/landwater/i-cover.html or contact IDOA by email at agr.icover@Illinois.gov or by phone at (217) 782-6297.

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