

Ontario Cover Crop Action Plan Committee Highlights

2019 - 2023

The mainstream adoption of cover crops on farms in Ontario and farmer-knowledge of the value of planting cover crops has increased since the establishment of the Ontario Cover Crop Strategy. This document highlights the four pillars of the strategy and how the members of the committee are fulfilling our commitments as a collective. For the complete action plan click [here](#). Below are highlights of committee actions accomplished between 2019 and 2023.

Ontario Cover Crop Steering Committee Members

Certified Crop Advisor Association, Conservation Authorities, Conservation Ontario, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario, Ontario Agri-Business Association, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

Committee Resource: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

- 1 Research
- 2 Policy and Programs
- 3 Communication
- 4 Champions

An Action Plan with momentum

The Cover Crops Action Plan has built within it evergreen activities that will renew interest in cover crops within its Steering Committee membership. The Cover Crops Steering Committee will meet periodically to check in on the progress of these activities within the Action Plan until cover crops become the mainstay.



ONTARIO COVER CROPS STRATEGY

Covered Land
Clean Water

1 Research on how different cover crop species fair on Ontario farms and best agronomic practices for planting cover crops

Millions
invested towards research projects related to cover crops

Grain Farmers of Ontario

Over \$2.0M Grain Farmers of Ontario funds towards active cover crop research projects since 2019.

Over \$4.2M total value of all active cover crop projects since 2019 (Includes Grain Farmers of Ontario funds plus industry and government).

ONFARM Data Dashboard

Of the 25 ONFARM soil health trial sites from across the province all 25 used cover crops in some part of their rotation from 2020 to 2022.

ONFARM Reports

The Soil Health and Water Quality Technical Reports summarize the ONFARM research program and the BMPs that were monitored, including the use of cover crops.

Living Laboratories Initiative

Living Lab - Ontario focuses on reducing soil and nutrient runoff from agricultural

land into Lake Erie, improving water quality, conserving soil health, and increasing biodiversity on agricultural lands in Ontario.

Ontario Cover Crop Feedback Report

The 2020 Ontario Cover Crop Feedback Report was developed.



2 Policy and Programs that encourage farmers to plant cover crops

Small Grains Program

2023 small grains and cover crops:

\$100,000

budget for winter 2022 auction of spring-planted small grains

1,929

acres of small grains followed by a legume crop or cover crop mix*

*future programming will be available to 2026.

Cover Crop Projects

more than **1,000** cover crop projects approved for funding or complete since 2019*

*through On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF), Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) and Lake Erie Agriculture Demonstrating Sustainability (LEADS).

Cover Crop Support

Cover crops are supported from an educational aspect from both the Environmental Farm Plan (for producers across the province) and the Farmland Health Check-Up (for producers across the Lake Erie watershed).

Nature-based Climate Solutions

The Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund was developed to conserve, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems.

Conservation Authority Cover Crop Support

Total across all Conservation Authorities 2022-2023

Funding	Participants	Hectares
\$653,130.00	307	12,824.2

Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund: Cover Cropping Projects

Current, forecasted for 2023-2024

Conservation Authority	ECCC Cash	Hectares
Essex	\$ 90,000.00	810
Grand River	\$ 89,810.00	4,180
Lower Thames	\$211,500.00	2,400
Maitland	\$ 97,453.35	3,542
TOTAL	\$488,763.35	10,932

3 Communicating the value of cover crops and tips for successful cover crops - 2022 - 2023 highlights

10 magazine articles published in 2022.

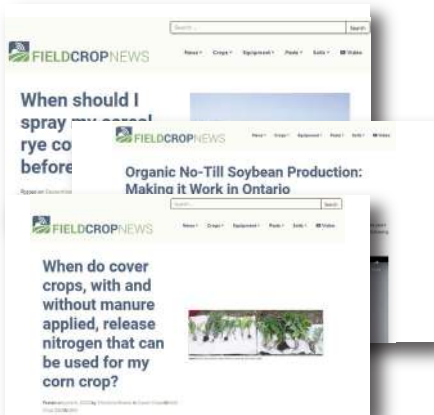
24 advertisements in Ontario farming magazines promoting the use of cover crops

16 e-newsletters highlighting cover crops

89 webinars, meetings, conferences highlighting cover crops

Q&A Sheets

- When should I spray my cereal rye cover crop before soybeans?
- Organic no-till soybean production: Making it work in Ontario
- When do cover crops, with and without manure applied, release nitrogen that can be used for my corn crop?



Ontario Cover Crop Recipes

Published [Ontario Cover Crop Recipes](#) - was awarded the 2022 Educational and Outreach Material Award for Short Publication by the American Society of Agronomy.



Cooking with Covers

Released [three videos](#) in the "Cooking with Covers" series.



Senate Committee on Agriculture

Presented to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry on the Soil Health Study, including cover cropping.



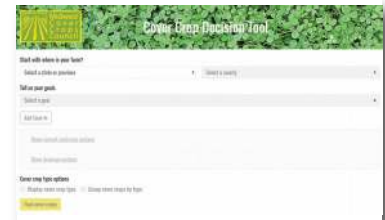
Social

Consistent messaging from the [Ontario Cover Crop Feedback Report](#).



Midwest Cover Crop Decision Tool

[Midwest Cover Crop Decision Tool](#) updated regularly with Ontario specific data.



4 Farmer Champions to promote, share cover crop best practices peer-to-peer

Promotion

122

Ontario Soil Network
Farmers promoting the
use of cover crops to
their peers as of 2022

Templates

Presentation and event templates are
available for Ontario Soil Network
participants.

