

Are you covered?

Stop soil erosion on canning crop acres



Developed by the BALMM Cover Crop Strategy Team



When canning crops, such as sweet corn and peas, are harvested, the fields are commonly left with little residue cover for the remainder of the season. These fields are at risk of losing valuable topsoil when exposed to heavy rains. Creative canning crop growers are successfully using cover crops to protect exposed soil when it is most vulnerable to erosion. Cover crops also offer the opportunity to “double crop”. Here are some windows of opportunity for maximizing sunshine with cover crops:



Dairy farmers who plant canning crops can then plant alfalfa after the crop harvest. Alfalfa planted in August establishes well due to warm temperatures and low weed competition. The alfalfa is harvested for forage, fixes nitrogen for use by later crops, and provides a place for spreading manure during the growing season.



Plant rye in late summer or fall after canning crop harvest to protect the soil. Rye can provide forage for grazing in the fall when other pasture is declining in quality. Rye planted at this time provides excellent weed suppression.



Oats planted after canning crop harvest are an inexpensive cover crop. They provide cover until spring even after dieing back in the fall. Corn or soybeans can easily be no-tilled into oat residue.



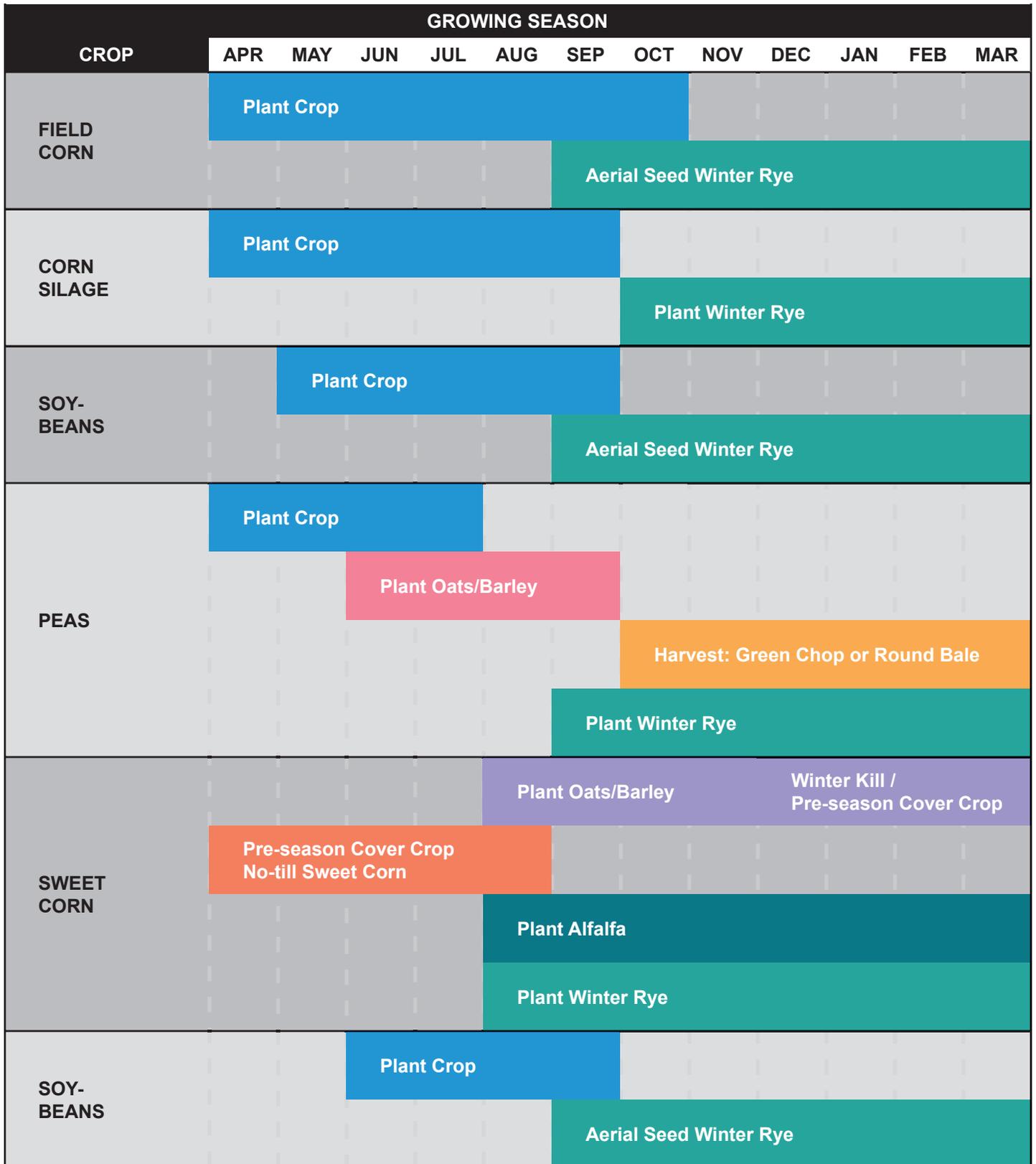
Cover crops help meet entrance requirements for the Conservation Security Program (CSP), and may qualify you for additional CSP enhancement payments. Contact your local NRCS office or the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov for more information about CSP.

The Basin Alliance for the Lower Mississippi in Minnesota (BALMM) is an ad-hoc coalition of groups formed to coordinate efforts to protect and improve water quality in the Lower Mississippi River Basin. Contact the MN Pollution Control Agency in Rochester for more information at (507)285-7343 or at www.pca.state.mn.us.

In cooperation with the MN Department of Agriculture. Contact Mark Zumwinkle at 651-201-6240

Olmsted County 507-285-6153 / Wabasha County 651-565-3345 / Winona County 507-523-2173
Steele County 507-451-1054 / Mower County 507-433-8429 / Fillmore County 507-765-3878

Maximizing Sunshine! Windows of Opportunity for Cover Cropping



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For information on aerial seeding winter rye, see the MDA Greenbook at www.mda.state.mn.us. Contact your local ag supplier for information on killing back winter rye; can be done at the same time as killback in preparation for no-till seeding. Prepared by the BALMM Cover Crop Strategy Team 3/05.

Are you covered?

Stop soil erosion on row crop acres



Developed by the BALMM Cover Crop Strategy Team



Row crop production often leaves fields vulnerable to erosion. Cover crops can protect soil that has been exposed to erosion after harvesting corn silage, soybeans, or other low residue crops. Cover crops provide multiple benefits beyond soil conservation. A vigorously growing cover crop can tie up nutrients until the following cash crop can utilize them. Cover crops can provide quality forage for grazing or haying. Here are some windows of opportunity for maximizing the sunshine you can harvest with cover crops:



A rye cover crop can be broadcast seeded after harvesting soybeans or corn silage. The cover crop grows enough to supplement the soybean residue providing a greater measure of soil erosion control.



Cover crops can be planted when manure is applied in the fall or manure can be applied after the cover crop is established. The growing cover crop ties up the nutrients in the manure. A vigorous cover crop can be grazed, hayed, or chopped for forage.



When planted after a mid-summer canning crop harvest, oats may grow enough to head out in the fall. They can then be green chopped or baled for livestock feed. If planted after sweet corn, oats can be baled with the corn stalks and still leave enough residue for soil erosion protection.



Winter rye can be aerial seeded into standing field corn in August. This provides an opportunity to establish a cover crop prior to cash crop harvest. Spring regrowth of the rye can be grazed and killed back in time to plant no-till soybeans.

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| CROP | GROWING SEASON | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR |
| FIELD CORN | Plant Crop | | | | | | Aerial Seed Winter Rye | | | | | |
| CORN SILAGE | Plant Crop | | | | | | Plant Winter Rye | | | | | |
| SOY-BEANS | Plant Crop | | | | | Aerial Seed Winter Rye | | | | | | |
| PEAS | Plant Crop | | | Plant Oats/Barley | | | Harvest: Green Chop or Round Bale | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Plant Winter Rye | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Plant Oats/Barley | | | Winter Kill / Pre-season Cover Crop | | |
| SWEET CORN | Pre-season Cover Crop No-till Sweet Corn | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Plant Alfalfa | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Plant Winter Rye | | | | | |
| SOY-BEANS | Plant Crop | | | | | Aerial Seed Winter Rye | | | | | | |

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