



Kent Conservation District

The intent of this program is to result in a viable cover crop and to reduce the pollution of ground and/or surface water.

Cover Crop Program Guidelines FY26

Planting Rates

	Crop	Planting Rates	Aerial Rates
Brassica	Winter Rape	8 lbs/acre	10.4 lbs/acre
	Forage/Oilseed Radish	8 lbs/acre	10.4 lbs/acre
	Forage Turnip	5 lbs/acre	6.5 lbs/acre
	Radish/Pea Mix	6 lbs/ac, 30 lbs/ac	7.8 lbs/ac, 39 lbs/ac
Legumes	Common Vetch	60 lbs/acre	78 lbs/acre
	Hairy Vetch	20 lbs/acre	26 lbs/acre
	Crimson Clover	15 lbs/acre	19.5 lbs/acre
	Winter Peas	50 lbs/acre	65 lbs/acre
	Annual Rye	15 lbs/acre	19.5 lbs/acre
Grasses	Cereal Rye/Triticale	100 lbs/acre	130 lbs/acre
	Barley	100 lbs/acre	130 lbs/acre
	Spring Oats	90 lbs/acre	117 lbs/acre
	Wheat/Speltz	100 lbs/acre	130 lbs/acre

*If you want to plant a seed mix that is not listed, please contact KCD for planting rates and approval a minimum of three (3) days prior to planting.

*Aerial application of crops requires a 30% increase in seeding rate.

Payment Rates:

Early planting must be done by Oct. 1 and reported by Oct. 7 = \$60/acre

Late planting must be done by Nov. 15 and reported by Nov. 19 = \$50/acre

Aerial application will result in a \$5 increase in payment per acre (\$65/acre early or \$55/acre late).

Dates to Remember:

- Application Sign-Up Period: June 2-Aug. 15
 - Early Planting Deadline: Oct. 1
 - Early Planting Reporting Deadline: Oct. 7
 - Late Planting Deadline: Nov. 15
 - Late Planting Reporting Deadline: Nov. 19
 - Cover Crop Destruction: Mar. 15-May 31
 - Destruction Reporting Deadline: June 2
 - Aerial Invoice(s), Seed Tag(s), and Germ Test Documents Due: June 9
 - Cover Crop Payment: June 16-June 30
- *No early or late planting deadline extensions will be granted***

Required documents include:

- Seed tags (with lot numbers, testing date, germination percentage of 80% or higher, and noxious weed/inert matter percentage).
- Homegrown seed documentation must provide results of testing within 6 months of planting per storage unit (i.e., grain bin) for 80% or higher germination by a DE or MD seed laboratory.
- Aerial application records (must include FSA farm and tract numbers and seeding rates).
- FSA maps with the planting area highlighted.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call:
Virginia Grimm at 302-363-4701 or KCD Office at 302-608-5370.

No payment will be made until the required documentation is provided.

Due to plant residue, cover crop establishment may be variable. After inspection, if field establishment isn't achieved and the required documents haven't been provided, the KCD Board of Supervisors will investigate and may deem applicant ineligible for payment. Cover crop assistance will be a maximum of **\$50,000.00** per applicant, paid at destruction. In the event enrollment in the program exceeds available funding, the Kent Conservation District reserves the right to adjust the maximum payment per participant.

CONDITIONS

1. To remain in compliance with State regulations, application of commercial fertilizers or animal manures (N and P) are not allowed on a field that is intended to receive or is receiving cover crop incentive payments prior to February 15. In the case of a hardship, manure may be allowed to be applied to enrolled land in the fall only after receiving approval from the Kent Conservation District (KCD) Board of Supervisors or their designee. If the cover crop has not already been planted, it must be planted within 7 days of manure application. Examples of hardships might include heavy rains that fill to capacity or overflow a liquid manure storage structure or diseased poultry litter that must be removed from the house immediately. The Board of Supervisors has the right to approve or disapprove such requests.
2. You will receive ONE payment. Payment for cover crops will be paid once the participant reports in writing that the crop has been destroyed in an approved manner between March 15 - May 31, 2026. Written planting reports must be made by the dates specified. Harvest is no longer allowed within the KCD Cover Crop program.
3. Farmers will self-certify in writing that program provisions have been met prior to receiving payment. Each program participant must review the FSA maps and certify the fields planted with the KCD by the dates listed. Failure to do this will result in no cost-share payment and withdrawal from the program. Field checks will be conducted.
4. Due to the large amount of plant residue left by small grains in a double cropped soybean system, establishment of cover crops may be variable which may require further investigation. If no visible establishment is present and applicants are unable to provide all necessary documentation, the KCD Board of Supervisors may deem applicant ineligible for payment.
5. Copies of seed tags, including homegrown seed, are required. Seed tags must include the following: Lot number, seed testing date, germination percentage above 80%, and noxious weed/inert matter percentage. Seed testing must be completed within 6 months of the planting date by a Delaware or Maryland seed laboratory. No payments will be made until the required documentation is provided.
6. Program participants must review their FSA maps and certify, in writing, by submitting a completed cover crop destruction form, indicating that the cover crops were destroyed between March 15 - May 31, 2026, in accordance with step #2 before receiving payment. Failure to report destruction by June 2, 2026, will result in nonpayment.
7. Options for end-of-winter management include killing by a "burn-down" herbicide, roller crimper, plowing it under (includes ripping, chisel plow, disking, etc.), green chop and/or hay baling (for on-farm use only by the applicant – no resale or distribution of any kind), before planting the new crop.
8. Aerial seeding (airplane or drone) must be completed by the listed dates and at the required rates. Receipts for aerial application must be provided with FSA farm field and tract numbers along with seed tag/germination records before payment will be made.
9. Planting of cover crop into hay ground and/or pasture is not eligible.
10. **Grazing on KCD cost-shared cover crops requires prior approval by the KCD Board of Supervisors:**
 - a. Farmer must submit a written request to KCD at least two weeks prior to grazing livestock. Please identify the fields to be grazed and the number and type of animals.
 - b. Cover crop must be well established. Under optimal conditions, grazing can commence 6 to 8 weeks after planting and after 2-week written notification.
 - c. KCD reserves the right to deny a grazing request based on poor crop establishment, too many animals per acre, or other conditions that may apply.
11. Cover crop acres must be physically located in Kent County, Delaware.