**Citation:** Golden, L.A., M.L. Hubbard, S. Utych, S.M. Newman, S. Hines, J. Thomas, N. Andrews, R.L. Som Castellano, D.P. Collins, and C. Sullivan. 2023. Benefits, barriers, and use of cover crops in the western United States: Regional survey results. Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 78(3). https://doi.org/10.2489/jswc.2023.00170.

**Cover Crop Survey**

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you do not want to answer a question, please feel free to skip it.

Cover crops are a crop grown for the protection and enrichment of the soil. Have you ever used cover crops on your farm?

1. Yes

2. No

*Next, we want to learn more about your opinion of cover crops*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Cover crops increase soil health. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops help control weeds. |  |  |  |  |  |
| It is hard to establish cover crops. |  |  |  |  |  |
| The growing season is too short to grow cover crops. |  |  |  |  |  |
| My neighboring farmers have a positive view of cover crops. |  |  |  |  |  |

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Cover crops reduce nutrient run-off. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops are expensive. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops increase soil moisture. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops reduce soil erosion. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops reduce yield in cash crops. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops increase disease. |  |  |  |  |  |

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| I don’t have enough time to manage cover crops. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops support pollinators. |  |  |  |  |  |
| For the crops/livestock I raise, cover crops are viewed as a positive practice in the industry. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops help farmers deal with climate change. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I lack equipment to grow cover crops. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cover crops are used by producers in my region. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have inadequate knowledge of how to grow cover crops. |  |  |  |  |  |

 What are the other factors, if any, that affect your ability or desire to use cover crops?

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

a. The Farm Bill created by the United States Department of Agriculture offers two voluntary cover crop financial assistance programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service: the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Prior to this survey, were you aware of one or both of these cover crop programs?

1. Yes

2. No

**>>>>>If answer Yes to question a:**

b. How many years have you participated in federal cover crop financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

 1. 0 years

 2. Less than 1 year

 3. 1-3 years

 4. 4-6 years

 5. 7 years or more

**>>>>>If answer No or 0 years to question a or b:**

c. Would you consider participating in federal cover crop financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

 1. Yes

 2. No

 3. Unsure

**>>>>>If answer any years besides 0 to b:**

d. Why have you chosen to participate in federal cover crop financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

**­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 e. Have you experienced any challenges related to participating in federal cover crop financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)? Please explain:

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**>>>>>If answer Yes or unsure to question c:**

f. Why would you consider participating in federal cover crop financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

**­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**>>>>>If answer No to question c:**

g. Why would you not consider participating in federal cover crop financial assistance programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

 **­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

h. Are you aware of other cover crop financial assistance programs available to you, not including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

1. Yes

2. No

**>>>>If answer Yes to question h:**

i. How many years have you participated in other cover crop financial assistance programs, not including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)?

 1. 0 years

 2. Less than 1 year

 3. 1-3 years

 4. 4-6 years

 5. 7 years or more

j. Please list which other cover crop financial assistance program(s) you have participated in, not including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*For this next question, we will ask your opinion on policy options that could be used to encourage farmers to plant cover crops.*

Prompt for Item 1 or 2:

Imagine that, to encourage farmers to adopt cover crops, the government has offered [item] for farmers who participate in a cover crop program.

How likely would you be to participate in a cover crop program if this incentive were provided?

Prompt For Item 3:

Carbon cap and trade is a government regulatory program that limits, or caps, the total level of carbon dioxide emissions produced by companies. If companies emit more than their carbon dioxide limit, they can purchase carbon credits from projects that pull carbon out of the atmosphere. Cover crops help hold carbon in the soil, which could allow farmers who grow cover crops to sell carbon credits through a cap and trade market.

Imagine that, to encourage farmers to adopt cover crops, the government has offered the ability for farmers who participate in a cover crop program to sell carbon they have earned on a cap and trade market.

How likely would you be to participate in a cover crop program if this incentive were provided?

[Item] randomly assigned 1 of

1. increased financial assistance

2. greater access to information about cover crop species

3. the ability for farmers to sell carbon credits they have earned by using cover crops on the cap-and-trade market

1. Very likely

2. Somewhat likely

3. Neither likely nor unlikely

4. Somewhat unlikely

5. Very unlikely

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Government support of agricultural conservation practices is important. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Government has a role in helping to protect soil and water resources.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Federal cover crop financial assistance programs are important.  |  |  |  |  |  |

Next we want to ask you about you interactions with other farmers and agriculture-related organizations.

In 2019, how many times did you attend agriculture-related workshops, conferences, and field tours?

In Qualtrics do a pull-down menu with:

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 or more

In 2019, how many agriculture-related committees did you participate in (i.e. Soil Conservation District committees, Commodity Commissions, grower associations, etc.)?

 In Qualtrics do a pull-down menu with:

 0

 1

 2

 3

 4

 5 or more

How often do other farmers ask you for advice on farming practices?

1. Never

2. Seldom

3. Sometimes

4. Often

How often do other farmers ask you for advice on agricultural conservation practices?

1. Never

2. Seldom

3. Sometimes

4. Often

How often do you interact with your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office?

1. Never

2. Seldom

3. Sometimes

4. Often

How often do you use the following outlets to learn about cover crops?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often |
| University extension |  |  |  |  |
| University research program |  |  |  |  |
| Local Natural Resources Conservation Service |  |  |  |  |
| Field tours |  |  |  |  |
| Industry groups (e.g., potato commission, cattleman’s association, fresh fruit association) |  |  |  |  |
| Other farmers |  |  |  |  |
| Workshops/conferences |  |  |  |  |
| Non-profit organization |  |  |  |  |
| Soil conservation district |  |  |  |  |
| The Internet |  |  |  |  |
| Agricultural publications |  |  |  |  |

 What are the other outlets, if any, that you use to learn about cover crops? **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about you and your farm

In total, how many acres did you farm in 2019? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How many years of experience do you have with cover crops?

In Qualtrics do a pull-down menu with: or Do a slider in Qualtrics

 0 years

 1 year

 2 years

 3 years

 4 years

 5 years

 6 years

 7 years

 8 years

 9 years

 More than 10 years

Which type of water system have you planted cover crops in? (Please select all that apply)

1. Irrigated

2. Rainfed/dryland

In what state(s) do you farm? *(Please select all that apply)*

Alaska

Arizona

California

Colorado

Guam

Hawaii

Idaho

Micronesia

Montana

Nevada

New Mexico

Oregon

Utah

Washington

Wyoming

Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

1. Less than high school degree

2. High school degree or equivalent

3. Some college (no degree)

4. Technical or Associate’s degree

5. Bachelor’s degree

6. Advanced degree

Do you own any of the land you plant to cover crops?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable

Do you rent/lease any of the land you plant to cover crops?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable

What is your role in your operation? *(select all that apply)*

1. Owner

2. Primary operator (i.e., the person primarily responsible for the day-to-day operation of the

 farm)

3. Family member

4. Hired manager/worker

Do you you plan to transition your farm to the next generation of family?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don’t know

4. Not applicable

Approximately, how many acres of cover crops did you plant in each of the following years? Use a zero to indicate if no cover crops were planted during a year.

Acres of cover crops in 2016: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Acres of cover crops in 2017: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Acres of cover crops in 2018: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Acres of cover crops in 2019: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Planned acres of cover crops in 2020: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What crops and/or livestock do you raise?

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 Do you graze any of the cover crops you grow?

1. Yes

2. No

What is your total household income, including income from all members of your family, in 2019 before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income.

1. Less than $29,999

2. $30,000 to $44,999

3. $45,000 to $59,999

4. $60,000 to $79,999

5. $80,000 to $99,999

6. $100,000 to $124,999

7. $125,000 to $174,999

8. $175,000 to $249,999

9. $250,000 to $499,999

10. $500,000 to $999,999

11. $1,000,000 to $1,999,999

12. More than 2,000,000

13. Prefer not to answer

How would you describe your political views?

1. Very liberal

2. Liberal

3. Moderate

4. Conservative

5. Very conservative

6. Prefer not to answer

Is there anything about cover crops you want to learn more about? If so, please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What, if anything, is the single greatest benefit of using cover crops on your farm?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What, if anything, is the single greatest challenge of using cover crops on your farm?

**End of survey……**

Thank you for your participation in the survey. In order to be eligible for the Amazon gift cards, please provide your email address. You are free to not provide this information, but if you do not provide it, you will not be eligible for the gift card.

Email\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_