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MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR COVER CROPS

1. Use the **Cover Crop Decision Tree worksheet** to plan your cover crop management system.
2. For your first cover crop experience, consider planting a species that winter-kills, such as fall-planted spring wheat or spring oats that will die in the winter and require no additional management in the spring.
3. Establish a plan for securing seed, planting method, fertilization and termination of winter-hardy cover crops.
4. Determine the most appropriate seeding technique for your operation based on time of year, equipment availability, seed selection, geographic location, current crop and next spring's crop.
5. Terminate the cover crop 10 to 14 days before corn planting and close to or following soybean planting.
6. Calculate your cover crop costs using the **Cover Crop Cost Calculator**.
7. Calculate your cover crop seeding rates using the **Seeding Rate Calculator**.
8. Apply 30 to 50 pounds of nitrogen at or before planting, or as an early side-dress if corn is the spring crop.
9. Learn about cost-share opportunities for cover crop production systems.
10. Know the termination requirements for cover crops to comply with the terms of crop insurance policies.

Sources: *Iowa Learning Farms, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Clean Water Iowa*