

2012-2013 Cover Crop

One of the many ways the State of Maryland is helping to improve water quality is through Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Cover Crop Program. Farmers are encouraged to grow a small grain cover crop behind corn, soybeans, vegetables or tobacco. Roots of the small grain cover crop absorb nutrients left in the soil by the previous crop and prevent these nutrients from entering the ground water during the winter.



Following the crop harvest of 2012, farmers in Prince George's County planted a record 3,355 acres of cover crop. The warm, sunny fall germinated the seeds quickly, creating a lush stand of small grains to cover the fields for the winter. This could potentially reduce nitrogen loading to groundwater by 24,250 pounds.

2012 – 2013 Cover Crop Program Statistics:

35 farmers signed up 5160 acres

5 farmers cancelled

30 farmers participated and fall certified that 3,355 acres were planted

85% of the farmers who signed up for the program planted cover crop in the fall

65% of the signed up acres were planted in the fall