



COVER CROPPING

Please note: If your project involves seeding perennials, please refer to either the Nitrogen Management — Fertilizers BMP or the Rotational Grazing BMP project categories

The RDAR On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) program supports the adoption of new Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) that use regionally appropriate crops to provide additional soil cover with living roots through the winter, maintaining a minimum of 6 inches (15 cm) of cover crop cover.

The purpose of cover crops is to improve soil health (organic matter and nutrient cycling) while reducing erosion risk. Other related benefits include retaining soil nutrients to prevent losses, reducing the risk of waterlogging for soils subject to spring flooding, and increasing forage or grazing opportunities. OFCAF Applicants may choose some or all of the BMPs listed below and other BMPs related to Nitrogen Management, Cover Cropping or Rotational Grazing. Costs of multiple new BMPs within each of the three activity categories can be combined to a maximum total grant payment of \$100,000 from all OFCAF funding sources for the period April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2028.

Planned activities must go beyond routine practices for your farm or fields. The BMPs supported by OFCAF must be new to your farm or field. Applicants may request funding to support eligible practices listed in the [OFCAF Program Guide](#).

Please outline how you will apply these practices on your farm using the BMP Action Plan on page 3 of this form, including labelled maps that show legal land descriptions (LLDs), project areas and field boundaries on an aerial photo or imagery. Any method of outlining and labelling can be used, as long as the fields are visible beneath. The [Guide to Locating and Labelling BMP Action Plans](#) provides further details. Your completed BMP Action Plan must be recommended by a qualified third-party adviser who is a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA); please refer to the [Guide to Accessing Agricultural Recommendations in Alberta](#). Your BMP Action Plan must be approved **in writing** by RDAR to be eligible for OFCAF funding.

Please note: Invoices and proof of payment must be dated after April 1, 2026, and you must receive RDAR's written approval of your application. Paid invoices must include Legal Land Descriptions (LLDs) of approved project fields and be submitted with proof of payment before November 30, 2026. Photographs with date stamps and GPS coordinates are required to document conditions before and after completing your project.

Cover Cropping with Drone – Quick Facts

- Maximum drone reimbursement: 50% up to \$20,000
- Minimum area to be seeded: 80 acres
- Seed cost cap: \$85/ac
- Drone must be purchased (not leased) with a spreader package • Valid Transport Canada pilot certificate required before applying • Video and GPS-stamped photos required for final report
- Drone spraying of pesticides is not permitted

GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Cover crops can be seeded with an annual crop, interseeded into an annual crop, or seeded following the harvest of an annual crop.
- Must be seeded by September 15 to allow sufficient growth before winter.
- If harvested or grazed, regrowth needs to retain at least 6 inches (15 cm) over winter.
- Clover may also be included as part of a perennial legume mix with a maximum of 50% clover in the Nitrogen Management – Fertilizers BMP category
- Applies only to fields currently in annual crop rotation.
- BMP must be new to the field section. Previously paid OFCAF projects on fields within the same field section are not considered new to the field.
- Purchased seed to a maximum of \$85/ac.
- Only the underseeded or interseeded crop that will have a living root until freeze up (e.g. winter cereals, annual ryegrass, turnip, brassica).
- Custom seeding¹ from a third-party operator or equipment rental.
- New drone purchase and spreader attachment for cover crop seed broadcasting through an authorized dealer. Must also be applying for a minimum of 80 acres of cover crop seed as per the terms and conditions.

Please note that the cost share for a Drone used to seed cover crops is 50%, up to a maximum reimbursement of \$20,000.

- You must have an existing drone pilot certificate relevant to the drone you are applying to purchase to be eligible.
- Note: if you do not seed the cover crop or provide an eligible invoice and proof of payment for the Final Report, the drone will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Drones must have a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of 150 kg or less
- Standard power supplies and batteries (up to 3) for drones are included in the base package.
- Maximum of 1 drone purchase across all program years 2026-2028.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

- Costs associated with fertilizer, crop protection or termination of the cover crop (mechanical or chemical).
- Crops that will be harvested as a marketable grain crop in the following year (e.g. harvested seed).
- Crop species seeded in spring for annual forage (e.g. corn, silage, greenfeed) or grazing (e.g., spring cereals)
- Biological products, e.g., inoculants.
- Costs related to rejuvenating existing forages, pastures, hay land, or the breaking of pasture or hay land to seed a crop.
- Annual crop regrowth.
- Drones purchased for spraying.
- Leasing costs of a drone and/or supporting equipment.
- Drones with a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) greater than 150 kg. For example, DJI AGRAS T100
- Drones purchased without a spreader package.
- Drone registration fee and pilot certification fee.

¹In-kind labour, and lease or rent-to-own arrangements are not eligible costs. Rentals are eligible only for the project location and duration. Eligible custom rate range for seeding: up to \$30/ac for drill or direct seeding; up to \$12/ac for broadcast seeding. Rates were adapted from the 2022 – 2023 Farm Machinery Custom and Rental Rate Guide. Saskatchewan Agriculture. Saskatchewan.ca/agriculture; and Alberta Custom Rates 2017 Custom Rates 2017 – Seeding | Alberta.c

COVER CROPPING - BMP ACTION PLAN

Please note: all costs must exclude GST. Use extra forms to add information and identify individual fields as needed.

Applicant Name:						
New BMP Objective – Check or fill (Y/N)						
Soil health improvement	Increased grazing*	Increased forage*	Erosion control	Other** (describe):		
Planned seeding dates (mo/yr):			Overwinter cover at least 6" (15 cm)*	Yes	No	
Is BMP new to the field (quarter section)?	Yes	No	Is BMP new to the farm?	Yes	No	
Field	Seeded Area	Confirm Field Currently in Annual Crop	Seed Mix	Seeding Method	Seed Cost (maximum of \$85/ac)	Cost per Field
(LLD)	(ac)	(Y or N)	(type)	(type)	(\$/ac)	(\$)
Total Area		A) Cost of All Seed \$				
B) Cost of Custom Seeding or Equipment Rental *** \$						
C) Cost of Drone (must complete Appendix) \$						
Describe the cover crop termination plan^:						
Is this BMP action plan recommended by a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA)?	Yes	No	Have you included a labelled map of your project?	Yes	No	
Name:	PAg/CCA:	Phone number:	Date:			
		Email:				
D) Cost of Other and/or PAg or CCA costs** \$						
E) Total Cost of Project (A+B+C+D) \$						

*Growth of 6" (15 cm) must remain overwinter for erosion control. **May include the cost of BMP Action Plan recommendation of up to 10% of the total project cost, to a maximum of \$2,000 per Applicant (total over all years of OFCAF program). ***Eligible custom rates for drill or direct seeding: up to \$30/ac; for broadcast seeding: up to \$12/ac. In-kind labour and lease or rent-to-own arrangements are not eligible costs. ^Chemical and mechanical termination costs are not eligible costs.

Appendix: Cover Copping with Drone Application

Drones or Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)

Transport Canada regulates drone registration and pilot certification through the [Drone Management Portal](#). Drone pilots must follow specific rules for each type of operation, as well as the [basic safety rules that apply to all drones](#).

Eligibility Checklist

	Yes	No
I have read Transport Canada's Drone regulations. Drone pilots must follow specific rules for each type of operation, as well as the basic safety rules that apply to all drones .		
I have an existing drone pilot certificate to fly the proposed drone, which is being purchased as required by regulations and have included a copy in the application.		
The drone registration number will be clearly marked on the drone and reported on your Final Report, with a picture.		
I understand that leasing a drone is not an eligible expense.		
I agree to a site inspection to see the drone and the seeded cover crop field.		
I understand that I must also apply for a minimum of 80 acres of cover crop seed, as per the terms and conditions. If you do not seed the cover crop, the drone will not be eligible.		
I understand that I will need to submit eligible invoices and proof of payment for the seed purchased for this project.		
I will submit a video and GPS-stamped pictures of the cover crop being seeded by the drone. This is a requirement for the Final Report to be eligible for reimbursement.		
I understand that the cost share for a Drone used to seed cover crops is 50% up to a maximum reimbursement of \$20,000.		
Drones must have a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of 150 kg or less		

Please describe using a minimum of 50 words:

1. The drone manufacturer, model and specs, including the maximum take-off weight for spreading cover crop seed.
2. Your seeding plan with the drone (number of species in the cover crop, seeding rate, time of application).
3. How do you plan to seed multiple seed sizes with the drone?
4. How many passes will you be making to seed the cover crop?

Regulatory Warning — Spray Drones in Canada

This section explains your legal responsibilities and confirms that RDAR does not authorize or assume liability for drone use.

⚠ STOP — READ BEFORE YOU APPLY

- Drone spraying of pesticides is illegal unless the product label specifically says “Drone/RPAS use.” Using pesticides off-label violates the Pest Control Products Act.
- As of February 2026, no agricultural in-crop pesticides are approved for drone application in Canada. This application does not authorize unapproved spraying.
- You must comply with Transport Canada rules for drone operation and any provincial/territorial pesticide-applier requirements.

Terms & Conditions Drone (RPAS) Compliance, Release & Indemnity

Compliance, Prohibited Uses, Assumption of Risk, Release and Indemnity for Drone Use)

1. **Compliance With Law and Labels.** The Applicant represents, warrants, and covenants that it will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and permits relating to the operation of drones (Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, “Drone”) and the use and application of pest control products, including the Pest Control Products Act (Canada) and related regulations. Without limiting the foregoing, the Applicant shall not use any drone to apply a pesticide unless the current, Health Canada-approved product label expressly authorizes application by “Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)” or “drone,” and the Applicant follows all label directions, limitations and drift-mitigation requirements. Use of a pesticide contrary to label directions is illegal.
2. **No Authorization or Endorsement.** RDAR and AAFC do not authorize, endorse, permit, or encourage the use of drones for any off-label or unapproved pesticide application. Funding, equipment support, or participation in any program or project under this application must not be construed as authorization for unapproved pesticide uses.
3. **Assumption of Risk.** The Applicant acknowledges that any off-label, unapproved, or otherwise non-compliant use of drones for pesticide application may pose safety, environmental, market-access, and legal risks, including potential fines or enforcement action, and voluntarily assumes all such risks.
4. **Release and Hold-Harmless.** To the maximum extent permitted by law, the Applicant releases and forever discharges RDAR, AAFC, and their respective directors, officers, employees, agents, contractors, and funders (collectively, the “Released Parties”) from any and all claims, losses, liabilities, penalties, damages, costs, and expenses arising from or relating to the Applicant’s (or its personnel’s or contractors’) use or misuse of drones, including any unapproved or off-label pesticide application or other non-compliant activity. For clarity, nothing in this Release limits liability for a Released Party’s gross negligence or wilful misconduct.
5. **Indemnity.** The Applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from and against all claims, demands, actions, losses, fines, penalties, liabilities, damages and costs (including reasonable legal fees) arising from or relating to: (a) the Applicant’s breach of this Agreement; (b) any drone operation; (c) any pesticide application; or (d) any regulatory non-compliance, including off-label pesticide use and violations under the Pest Control Products Act.
6. **Certification & Records.** Upon request, the Applicant will promptly provide evidence of (a) valid drone registration and pilot certification under Transport Canada rules; and (b) for any pesticide application by drone, the specific product label authorizing drone use and records demonstrating compliance with label directions and any applicable provincial or territorial requirements.
7. **Breach; Remedies.** Any breach of this clause is grounds for immediate rejection, termination, or repayment of funding or equipment support (as applicable), and may be reported to the relevant authorities.

Applicant Attestation

Label Compliance. I will not use drones to apply any pesticide unless the product label expressly authorizes drone use and I follow the label directions in full.

No Off-Label Use. I understand that off-label drone spraying is illegal under the Pest Control Products Act.

Current Status. I understand that no agricultural in-crop pesticides are currently approved for drone application in Canada.

Transport Canada Compliance. I will maintain the required drone registration and pilot certification and provide proof upon request.

By signing below, the Applicant acknowledges and agrees to the above.

Authorized Signatory Name:	
Title:	
Organization:	

Signature:

Date:

Map on an aerial photo or image showing the project fields, legal land locations, and field boundaries. Any method of outlining and labelling fields may be used as long as the fields are visible beneath. Further details are available in [A Guide to Locating and Labelling BMP Action Plans](#).

