



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the Secretary

50 Harry S. Truman Parkway

www.mda.maryland.gov

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maryland Department of Agriculture Extends Deadline For Planting Cover Crops to November 12

ANNAPOLIS, MD (October 24, 2018) Due to a late harvest and saturated soil conditions, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has extended the November 5 planting deadline by one week for farmers who have signed up to plant cover crops this fall with the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. Farmers now have until November 12 to plant qualifying cover crops of rye, wheat and triticale on their fields to help control soil erosion and recover unused plant nutrients remaining on their fields.

The extension is only available to farmers who use the following planting methods: no till, conventional, or broadcast with light, minimum or vertical tillage. With the extension, farmers must certify their cover crop with their local soil conservation district within one week of planting and no later than November 19 in order to be reimbursed for associated seed, labor, and equipment costs.

“Extending the planting deadline allows farmers enrolled our popular Cover Crop Program to plant more acres of protective cover crops on their fields this fall to control soil erosion, reduce nutrient runoff, build healthy soils, and protect water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay,” said Hans Schmidt, the department’s Assistant Secretary for Resource Conservation. “Importantly, the extended forecast calls for mild temperatures which should allow for germination to take place,” he said.

Cover crops are cereal grains that grow in cool weather. They help slow down rainwater runoff during the winter, when the soil would otherwise be exposed, while recycling any nutrients remaining in the soil from the previous summer crop. They are a key feature in Maryland’s efforts to reduce the amount of nutrients entering the Bay.

Maryland’s Cover Crop program is funded by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund. For more information, farmers should contact their local soil conservation district or the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program at 410-841-5864.

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