

# Midwest Cover Crops Council: Selector Tool



The Midwest Cover Crops Council (MCCC) was formed in 2006 from the collaborative effort of academia, farmers, government and non-government agencies to maintain year-round living cover crops in the Midwest region.

The MCCC has a volunteer-based board with representatives from each Midwestern state, including farmers, non-profit organizations, and land grant universities.

The MCCC aims to provide extension materials to farmers and others interested in implementing cover crops through a variety of delivery mechanisms, including a recently revised website. The website helps promote research done across the Midwest that is timely, easy-to-find and user friendly. Within MCCC's website are a pair of cover crop selector tools: one for row crops and one for specialty crops. Currently the Vegetable Crop Tool is available for Michigan only, but work is underway to expand its geographic region to other states, including Indiana. The Row Crop Tool covers most Midwestern states, including Indiana.

Intuitive in nature, the tools walk farmers through a series of selections:

State and County; Cash Crop Planting and Harvest Dates; Soil Drainage Information; and Goals for Cover Crop Adoption.

Using vast information on cover crop attributes and 30 years of localized weather history, the tool will provide a list of good-better-best cover crop selections and suggested seeding dates. Anna Morrow, MCCC Program Manager, points out that a click on any of the cover crops listed will return in-depth information for that species – this aspect is especially helpful for those who are new to cover crops and unsure about what species would work best in their operation.

One feature that MCCC Program Manager, Anna Morrow, highlighted was the extensive information available for each cover crop species. Within the selector tool, once a farmer provides their state and county, a list of applicable cover crops will appear. Next, cash crop, soil drainage, and cover crop goal information help narrow down the list of acceptable cover crops. The farmer can then click on each individual cover crop and receive in-depth information that will help insure success.

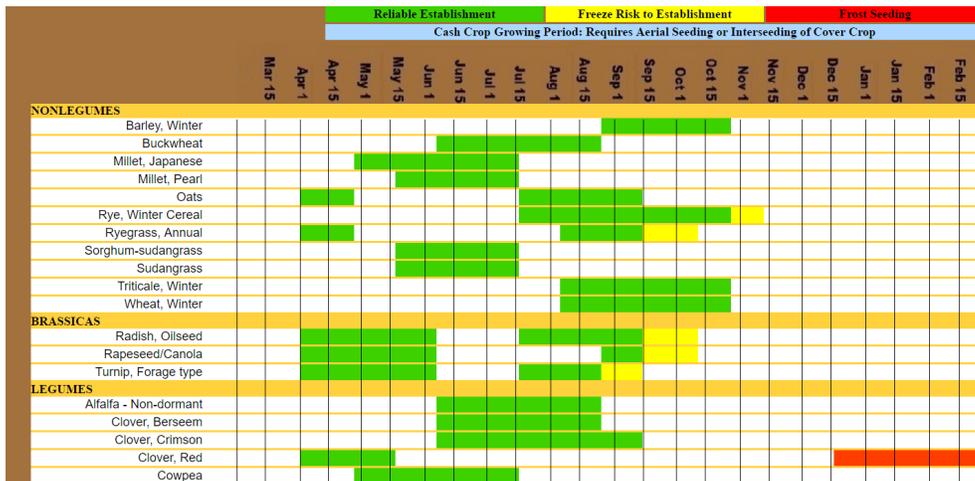
Morrow also points big plans and events ahead for the MCCC:

- Update of the Indiana Cover Crop Selector Tool, including the long term integration of the NRCS Seeding Calculator
- Expansion of the Vegetable Selector Tool to Indiana, and other states in the future
- Working with Purdue University to convert the Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide to mobile platforms for smartphones

Accuracy, precise information, and usability are important to MCCC and the farmers who use their tools – regular updates such as these are critical.

The MCCC's 2017 Annual Meeting will take place in March in Grand Rapids, Michigan and is open to anyone interested in learning more about cover crops. The MCCC is excited to highlight on-farm experiences at this year's conference.

To learn more about this meeting, other events, and the selector tools, visit [mccc.msu.edu](http://mccc.msu.edu).



The image on the left illustrates the numerous features of the Selector Tool. The example shows what cover crops can be planted when and works best for a situation in Adams County.



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