Cover Crops

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Cover crops and their benefits

- Erosion Control
- Nutrient Capture/Cycling
- Improve Soil Health
- Water Management
- Increase Biodiversity
- Balance C:N Ratio
- Nitrogen Fixation
- Reduce Compaction
- Weed Supression
- Provide Forage/Grazing

Cover crop types

- Grasses – residue cover
- Legumes – nitrogen fixation
- Brassicas – compaction/roots and residue cycling
- Others – biodiversity

Cool Season vs Warm Season
Grass vs Broadleaf vs Cocktail

Biomass Production & Water Use
Annual Cropping Systems

Missed opportunities for resource assimilation and dry matter production

Dry matter production or resource loss (mass/time)

Annual grain crop
Winter cover crop

Spring Summer Autumn Winter

Opportunities for resource losses, water, sunlight, and CO₂

Use cover crops after low residue crops
Use cover crops after corn silage or wheat
Use cover crops on soils receiving more water than can be stored in the profile