

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 13, 2023

**CONTACT**

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## IDOA Fall Covers for Spring Savings Crop Incentive Program Applications Go Live Dec. 15

*New Opportunity for Pre-Enrollment Available Now*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Fall Covers for Spring Savings Program opens for applications on Friday with pre-enrollment available now for the first time in the program's history.

Users are encouraged to enter their information into the application and validate it during the pre-enrollment period that started on Dec. 4, 2023. Applications can be submitted when the program opens at 8:00 a.m. on Dec. 15, 2023. Applications can be saved and edited at any time, prior to submittal.

Pre-Enrollment Period	8:00 a.m. CST, Dec. 4, 2023
Application Submittal Period	8:00 a.m. CST, Dec. 15, 2023
Program Closes	11:59 p.m. CST, Jan. 15, 2024

A total of 140,000 acres are available for the 2024 program. In 2023, the acreage allotment was met in under 24 hours, and a total of over 182,688 acres were requested by the time the application period ended. Funding of eligible acreage is on a first come, first serve basis.

"For the fifth consecutive year, the Fall Covers for Spring Savings program incentivizes farmers to conserve Illinois' soil," said **Jerry Costello II, Illinois Director of Agriculture**. "Cover crops are proven to improve soil health, reduce erosion, increase drought resistance, and reduce pests, weeds and diseases."

The program is applicable for acreage in Illinois seeded to cover crops in the fall of 2023 that will be planted to an insurable crop in 2024. Eligible applicants will receive a premium discount up to \$5 per acre on the following year's crop insurance, depending on individual crop insurance policies, for every cover crop acre enrolled and verified in the program.

Applicants will be required to certify that their cover crops are approved through their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office before applying. Applicants will also need their current FSA-578 and federal crop insurance policy number(s) for the application.

The discount program was designed to promote additional acres of cover crops that are not covered by other state or federal incentives. IDOA will use a combination of tools to verify that acres applied for through this program are planted in cover crops. The program is only applicable for those with coverage through the United States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA) crop insurance program. Confirmed applications will be forwarded to the USDA-RMA for processing and for application of premium discounts to 2024 crop insurance invoices.

The program can be traced back to the legislative efforts of former Senate Agriculture Chairman Scott Bennett who championed the program and ensured its initial funding. Prior to his death, Bennett worked closely with the Illinois Department of Agriculture to develop this program, which he called “an important tool to help farmers.”

Pre-enrollment and applications are available at: [\*\*IDOA | Cover Crop Application \(illinois.gov\)\*\*](#) Applications will be accepted until 11:59 P.M. CST on January 15, 2024. Further information can be obtained by contacting the IDOA at (217) 782-6297.

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