



CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION 2024 COVER CROPPING COMPONENT (BMP 9) FIELD CROP SECTOR

The purpose of the Agrisolutions climat project is to implement beneficial management practices (BMPs) on farms in order to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by the agricultural sector. For farm businesses, it is an opportunity to help fight climate change.

Component objectives

- Increase the number of businesses and the amount of surface area with cover crops
- Improve soil fertility and promote nutrient cycling
- Develop cover cropping knowledge and skills



Am I eligible?

- If you operate a field crop business that produces grains, regardless of production method (conventional, organic, or other), and wish to plant cover crops, you are eligible.¹
- Your business must be duly registered with the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) and have both a ministerial identification number (NIM) and a UPA number.

When do I register?

There are four registration windows for the 2024 season:

- From the opening announcement to June 30
- From July 1 to 31
- From August 1 to 31
- From September 1 to 30

What conditions apply?

In the Agrisolutions climat Cover Cropping component, the *Guide des cultures de couverture en grandes cultures*² serves as the reference document for planting and managing cover crops. Participants will need to refer to it to understand the desired conditions for success associated with this BMP.

General conditions

- **New this season:** The surface area for the cover crops must be **15 hectares**.
- The crop rotation for the proposed plot must include grains.
- The business must receive coaching from an advisor who can certify that the cover crop planted complies with program requirements.
- Financial assistance is provided based on the area of cover crops planted.
- Both the business and the advisor must commit to adhering to the conditions set out in this document.

Conditions for disqualification

- Plots that already receive funding for cover cropping through a provincial or federal government program are not eligible.
- Plots in which cover crops are fully or partly for sale (e.g., crops that are mown to be made into commercial hay, grain harvested for sale) are not eligible.
- The project officer reserves the right to disqualify plots for reasons other than those stated in this document.

¹Cover crops: crops established specifically to cover soil to protect it from erosion and nutrient loss via leaching and runoff (Reeves, 1994; Dabney et al., 2001; Frick et al., 2017). Such crops may improve soil, water, and air quality as well as nutrient capture, cycling, and management or play a role in integrated pest management systems (Delgado et al., 2006).

²Vanasse, A., Thibaudeau, S., and Weill, A., 2022, *Guide des cultures de couverture en grandes cultures*. This guide (in French only) will be provided free of charge to all producers and agrologists upon request for as long as the copies purchased through the project last.

Seeding

- The recommended seeding dates and rates are set out in the *Guide des cultures de couverture en grandes cultures*.
- Cover crops must not be the same species as the main crop.

Destruction, burial, and harvesting

- Cover crops must cover the soil over the winter, and funded plots must not be tilled under in the fall of the year they are seeded.
- Cover crops may be destroyed the following spring using any appropriate method (e.g., mechanical, chemical, winterkill).
- Cover crops may be mown in the fall if a height of at least 15 centimetres is left.

Soil improvement and pedology

- The soil must not be tilled, drained, or levelled after the cover crops have been seeded.
- Certain conditions may cause plots to be disqualified (e.g., recent clearing or rehabilitation, landslides, soil filling or excavation, etc.).

Crop management

- Proper management practices should be used, especially with respect to pests.
- Crop management must meet all applicable agri-environmental and regulatory requirements that apply to farming activities.
- There are no restrictions with respect to fertilization practices.

What financial assistance is available?

- Farmers receive \$95/hectare to plant up to 240 hectares of cover crops, to a maximum of \$22,800.
- Advisors receive \$500 plus \$45 travel allowance per business³:
 - An additional \$90 is available if a sample is taken to measure the yield and analyze the leaf biomass of the cover crop (optional).
 - Aerial biomass analysis costs for one field involved in the project (i.e., the largest field listed in the application or any leguminous cover crop) are included.
- Financial assistance is provided on the condition that the end-of-season report is received and accepted.
- No farm business may receive more than \$75,000 over the three years of the project (2022, 2023, and 2024).



³Only advisors recognized through the Agriconseils networks are eligible.

How are applications analyzed and assessed?

Applications will be assessed based on the conditions for success for ensuring cover crops establish and protect the soil over the winter. The reference document for assessing applications is the *Guide des cultures de couverture en grandes cultures*.

Registration process for 2024

New this year, registration for the Agrisolutions climat project will be online.

This approach will, of course, bring its share of challenges for everyone. To help with this, farmers are invited to watch the tutorials we have prepared at upa.qc.ca/agrisolutions-climat/cultures-de-couverture.

Consultants and their advisors must also register on the platform to keep track of the businesses they work with.



Instructions for farmers

1. Create your account on the platform at agrisolutions.quebec/login.
2. Receive email acknowledgement confirming that your account has been created on the web platform.
3. Complete form 1, which contains a self-declaration that you purchased nitrogen fertilizer between March 2 and June 30, 2022, and states which BMP or BMPs you have chosen. (You do not need to answer “yes” in the self-declaration to participate in BMP 9.)
4. Receive a second email notifying you of your eligibility and, if applicable, how much financial assistance is available to your business.
5. Complete form 2 with the help of your agronomic advisor, providing more detailed information regarding the BMP or BMPs you wish to implement.
6. Receive a communication in your file specifying the maximum amount of money you are eligible to receive at the end of the season. You will receive a proposed agreement after September 30, 2024 (the end of the application window) to make the respective commitments of your farm business and of Agrisolutions climat official.
7. Complete form 3 at the end of the season with the help of your advisor and submit all required documents on the Agrisolutions climat platform for final review and payment request.

Instructions for agronomic advisors

1. Create your account on the platform at agrisolutions.quebec/login.
2. Receive an acknowledgement of receipt confirming your registration on the platform.
3. Log in to your account on the Agrisolutions climat platform and collaborate with the farm businesses that have identified you for professional coaching.

For more information:
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