

COVER CROPS AND MANURE

Cover crops can aid in manure nutrient retention when the manure is applied to an established cover crop using either low disturbance or broadcast manure application equipment.

- Manure should only be applied to overwintering cover crops that have at least a few inches of above-ground growth. Soil moisture and other environmental conditions should be favorable to avoid cover crop injury and nutrient losses.
- Low-disturbance manure equipment application rates should match soil conditions so that manure remains in the soil.
- Surface application rates of manure should be based on soil conditions/infiltration rates and monitored to avoid cover crop injury.
- Manure application rates should always be based on the farm's nutrient management plan and geographic restrictions.
- Both types of equipment should be evaluated to ensure that the cover crop survives the application.
- Spreader distribution and manure solids content should influence application rate adjustments.
- Adjusting cash crop maturity date can also allow for earlier cover crop establishment and manure application.
- Manure can be applied to living cover crops in the fall or spring, depending on cover crop goals and the farm's nutrient management plan.



Low disturbance



Surface application