



INTERNATIONAL
COTTON
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

MAINTAIN SOIL COVER

FACT SHEET

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Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton Production (SEEP)

Key Farm Practice

Maintaining soil cover is another key Regenerative Agriculture objective. It protects the soil from rain and wind erosion, adds organic matter, and nourishes soil microorganisms.

Practices and Benefits

- **Cover crops are the most common solution outside tropical regions.**
 - Protect soil from erosion.
 - Fix nitrogen and add organic matter.
 - Loosen compaction, suppress weeds, improve infiltration, and retain nutrients.
- **Double cropping is feasible in tropical areas where rain or irrigation allows multiple crops per year.**
 - Provides similar soil health benefits as cover crops.
 - Adds additional farm income.

Examples

Small grains after cotton can maintain soil cover while generating income from grazing or grain. In the tropics, no-till planting of a new crop right after cotton harvest provides continuous soil protection.



Challenges in Cotton

Cotton requires more heat units to mature than most crops and has no value if fiber development is halted by lack of heat or early frost. Because the growing season is long (5–7 months), there is limited time for a second crop after harvest outside the tropics.



Keeping soil covered through residues, cover crops, or double cropping helps protect the land, improves fertility, and sustains soil life essential for future cotton yields.