

509 Funding Applications Due Now (Newsletter Mar 2023) – Plants Dig Soil Consulting Ltd.

#RealisticRegenAg | There is money out there for the taking for things like seeding cover crops, the cost of the cover crop seed, soil mapping, soil testing, splitting your nitrogen applications using inhibitors and even for hauling and applying manure, compost and digestate. You can also get money to establish perennials or top up legumes in your perennial stands. And if you want to get into rotational grazing, you can get your internal fencing and water supplies covered. Stay tuned to the rest of this episode for more details as I cover this and the other interesting things that are happening in my world.

Newsletter signup:

<https://mailchi.mp/plantsdigsoil/newsletter>

OFCAR RDAR Program (Alberta):

<https://rdar.ca/ofcar/>

My service offerings:

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/pricing/>

University of Lethbridge Sustainable Ag Showcase

<https://www.ulethbridge.ca/artsci/biological-sciences/sustainable-agriculture-showcase>

Email: scott@plantsdigsoil.com

Twitter (Scott): <https://twitter.com/scottcgillespie>

Twitter (Company): <https://twitter.com/PlantsDigSoil>

LinkedIn (Scott): <https://www.linkedin.com/in/scottcgillespie/>

LinkedIn (Company): <https://www.linkedin.com/company/plants-dig-soil>

YouTube: (Company): <https://www.youtube.com/@scottcgillespie>

Transcript (auto-generated by <https://otter.ai>)

<https://www.plantsdigsoil.com/podcast/509-funding-applications-due-now>

There is money out there for the taking for things like seeding cover crops, the cost of the cover crop seed, soil mapping, soil testing, splitting your nitrogen applications using inhibitors and even for hauling and applying manure, compost and digestate. You can also get money to establish perennials or top up legumes in your perennial stands. And if you want to get into rotational grazing, you can get your internal fencing and water supplies covered. Stay tuned to the rest of this episode for more details as I cover this and the other interesting things that are happening in my world.

Hi, my name is Scott Gillespie of Plants Dig Soil, the name of the podcast and the consulting company. We're an independent agronomy company. We do not sell products. We provide advice only. We focus on #RealisticRegenAg which has to be proven and profitable. We work in person or remote or a combination of the two. Our pricing is set to be affordable to anyone from a Q&A package to full farm planning. There's no long-term commitments, you can retain our services, do it yourself or hire others. Of course we always love to work with people over the long term.

Just before we get into the OFCAF funding, I want to highlight an opportunity to see all of you in person if you're in Alberta. The University of Lethbridge is having a sustainable agriculture showcase on March 31st and it goes until April 1st. It starts with a public lecture by Dr. Martin Entz. He was my thesis advisor when I did my master's degree back in the early 2000s in what would now be called regenerative agriculture. So I have been doing this thinking about this for a long time. And it's going to be a great lecture to hear him speak. So that's on the Friday evening. On the following day, there's a mini conference going on with speakers on microbiology, greenhouse gas emissions, some of the local research that's happening here and there will be a small trade show. I will be set up with my booth there along with Aline. So we hope to see you there

Okay, let's get into cover crops. So this one is fairly straightforward. It has to be new to the farm or new to the field that it's in. It must be purchased seed and it only covers the cost of custom application. Anyone can sell you the seed and anyone including neighbors could custom apply it for you. So keep that in mind when you're thinking about this. The other big restriction is that it has to have at least six inches of growth going into the winter, so that would be fall of 2023. It can be harvested or grazed for forage or harvested for forage or grazed as long as it has this amount going into the fall. Specific to my area or into the high value irrigated areas for bedding ahead of potato or other horticultural systems. This is a permitted use for this program as long as you have the growth going into the winter.

Soil testing and mapping is the next BMP or best management practices you can get covered in this program. Now there is a change from last year it was last year you can get soil testing and mapping done. For some reason they have changed it this year that it can only be one of them. So it is still a benefit. You can get your fields mapped which is the higher cost or the higher barrier to entry. And then you'll still have to pay for the soil testing but if you've been soil testing in the past, that's already something you're used to. So it at least brings down your costs to more normal costs for that you have and in the end you get these maps in zones that you can use in the future for soil sampling for making prescription maps and for anything that you need them for.

Let's move on to amendments. So this is for things like manure, compost and digestate application to the fields. The biggest restriction is it has to be something that the field hasn't had in the previous 10 years. It doesn't cover the cost of the amendment. But it does cover the costs up to \$75 per acre of hauling the the the amendment to the field and for the application so it can be a combination of the both and if it's higher than that they just pay up to \$75/ac. So this is a good way to get some manure out to fields that you had a hard time getting stuff out to because they are a long distance away. And that is the point of this program or this part of the program was to get the newer in a better place or used on the fields that really need it. So if you're doing this or planning on it, it's a great year to get at least a fair portion of your costs covered especially if the barrier was the hauling and application costs.

Now perhaps the most confusing best management practice that we have in this program, which is the fertilizer side of it, is next. Something that disappeared from the program that took me a little while to figure out is that they were originally going to cover the costs of delaying your nitrogen from fall to spring and that has disappeared. The reasoning I have been given for this is because the fertilizer prices dropped. So you actually were further ahead to do it anyways. Now I there's not much I can do about that. That's their rules. But that is what has happened.

Stabilizer products including ESN are in there. These are the inhibitors that helps you prevent the gas off of greenhouse gases and the ESN does the same thing. Not a slow release, not just the initial part.

There's some additional restrictions in this year which I don't understand why but they ESN can only be \$4,800 that you get for it I'm not quite sure why but it's in there.

Now if you want to shift from broadcast to the banding of your fertilizer, this can be put in here but again, it only covers the custom banding or rental equipment do this. I don't know why you can't do things to retrofit your equipment. I think that would be something that would be a lot more beneficial to producers and would allow them to continue doing it for the years to come. But that is the restrictions of the program. And they're only allowing \$15,000 per applicant for this. Again, I'm not sure why but that is the rules of the program.

Split application is the next and again it's it has it has restrictions in it. It has to be new, a new practice in only covers third party rental costs for applying it again. It doesn't allow you to purchase equipment that allows us to do it on but again, it's the rules of the program.

And this is an odd one to fit in here. I don't know how it exactly fits into this but another one under this same nitrogen management system is increasing perennials in your system. So it has to have been an annual or an annual crop rotation and you have to be establishing perennials and because it's it's a climate action fund and because they're looking at nitrogen reduction, it has to have the legumes at least 50%. And so, this is another one if you are thinking of doing it. You have some areas that just never really produce and have thought to just put them into perennials and this can cover the costs of the seed and again is only custom or rental equipment. And I'm just going to mention it here because it kind of fits more with the rotational grazing even though it's in the application for rotational grazing side. That's if you want to increase the perennial legumes to boost up an existing perennial system then you can apply for that as well.

Finally, the rotational grazing portion of the program. The main highlight of this program is help get help with internal permanent for temporary fencing within pasture that you're already using and already has a perimeter fencing established. Now the interesting thing is that in the RDAR program, which this one talking about, the perimeter fencing is not included, but in a different one, the Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association, who only does applications for the rotational grazing side of things, will allow permanent fencing as long as you meet stringent rules. Their program is a lot more detailed, but it also provides a lot more support. So if you need a lot of help doing that program is the one that I would recommend you to go for. And in that case I actually have someone that I refer to as specializes in this application. If you are just looking to get things things like just some of the fencing and you can make from the application this has included things like the razor grazer, the most popular one, but any of the temporary financing all in one systems where it will retract it and put it back in. Most things that you can think of they will cover for this so I do like this side of their program because you actually end up with infrastructure. Also water distribution systems are included in this. There are restrictions. It is not for making the water it's just to help get water to them without them having to walk back.

Just a few more general notes about right now. It can be only things that are happening in 2023 and invoices have to be after April 1st. And it also has a rule in there that the invoices have to be after you're approved. So this is why I'm really encouraging you to get now so that you have approval, anything that you buy, or need to access and qualify for the program because we are finding things like cover crops and some supplies are running low. And so if you don't buy them soon, you might get there. So this is why it's really important to get this in now. And they are taking applications now they'll close November 30th. But if they have funded all applications before that date they'll stop. Again, I encourage you to get the application in as soon as possible.

There are also a bunch of there's always fine fint. There's always details and that's why I really want you to get a hold of me or go to the website. Then the main thing is you have to be an active producer with \$25,000 gross farm income. Other programs have different levels. So sometimes that can help. The RDAR program pays back 85%. Other programs such as the Candadian Forage and Association pays back at 70%. This is where going through what you want to do, what your costs are and ensuring your payment is maximized.

Something that they are really stressing this year is they want a picture GPS even if it seems silly to take a picture of an image better when you choose a field it must be done. Soil sampling or anything because these fields don't look any different. So that's going to be important thing. And one other thing I just want to bring up is that the total payments is \$75,000. So that's \$88,000 project cost at 85% gives you about \$75,000 grants. And that's where in other programs where it's a lower percentage paid have a higher project costs, still maximize. And if you apply to different programs, which you're allowed to say say if you do our course some cover crops and grasslands association for raising infrastructure, the total that you get paid for \$75,000 You have to watch that as doing that. If they audited it and they found you went over you could be liable.

And just to stress one more time, you need a professional agrologist or certified crop advisor on an application. I have both of those designations. And so that is why I promote this and then another big thing is that my consulting fees included in the application. So it's it's 10% of whatever the project value is up to \$2,000. So if you're on the fence, unsure about starting independent agronomy and you're looking at trying some of these regenerative practices, there is no better time to start.