Cover Cropping is an inexpensive and simple way to address many resource concerns on the farm while adding greatly to the quality of your soil. In Hawaii, there are several species of grasses, legumes, and forbs available to farmers that can be used as Cover Crops, including oats, ryegrass, sunn hemp, buckwheat, and sorghum.

These Cover Crops can benefit the land by:
- Reducing erosion from wind and water
- Capturing and recycling nutrients in the soil
- Promoting biological nitrogen fixation
- Increasing biodiversity
- Providing weed suppression
- Proving supplemental forage for livestock and pollinators
- Managing soil moisture, and
- Minimizing soil compaction

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with farmers and ranchers to recommend conservation practices like Cover Cropping that help address natural resource concerns. Our main goal is to protect, enhance, and preserve our soil, water, air, plants, and animals using sound science and expertise. For Cover Crops, NRCS provides producers with recommendations on site-specific plant species selection, land preparations, seeding rates, timing, and water requirements, as well as advice on how and when to terminate the crop to best capture the targeted benefits.

We help our clients develop a Conservation Plan that identifies appropriate conservation practices needed to address the natural resource concerns on their property. The practices we recommend are supported by NRCS technical standards specially adapted for local conditions. We provide technical guidance, agronomic and engineering services throughout the planning process, as well as installation guidelines for each practice.
that we recommend.

NRCS can also provide funding to offset the cost of trying out these new approaches through Farm Bill programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Owners or lessees of farm land who are engaged in agricultural production may participate in EQIP and other Farm Bill programs. Program information and factsheets are available on our national programs website at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/.

Participation in our programs is voluntary, and applications are accepted year-round. In addition, historically underserved producers (limited resource farmers/ranchers, beginning farmers/ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers, Tribes) may be eligible for higher payment rates.

If you are interested in learning more about NRCS and the services we provide, including funding and technical assistance for conservation practices, contact your local USDA NRCS Field Office.