

Multi-species Cover Crop Demonstration with Harvest Moon



Cradle Coast NRM is partnering with **Harvest Moon** as part of the Our Natural Advantage project, showcasing Harvest Moon's work to practically incorporate multi-species cover crops into north-west Tasmanian vegetable production systems.

What is a multi-species cover crop?

In an intensive vegetable cropping system, a multi-species cover crop is a mix of grasses, legumes and herbs sown in between vegetable crops to protect the soil during autumn and winter from rainfall events. They are a cost-effective way to reduce most soil erosion, providing a level of insurance to ensure the nutrient rich topsoil stays in place.



Alison Dugand from Harvest Moon has been a key driver and supporter of this demonstration.

What: Demonstrating the practical implementation of multi-species cover crops between cash crops in cool climate vegetable production

- Comparing bare fallow to multi-species cover
- Using common cover crop mix from multiple plant families
- Methods of seeding, management and termination
- Farm equipment used
- Soil and plant health outcomes
- Productivity benefits

Where: Lillico Road, Don, TAS

When: The multi-species cover was planted March 2025. Cradle Coast NRM will work with Harvest Moon to monitor soil and plant health at the site through to cover crop termination and beyond.

Who: Cradle Coast NRM will work in partnership with Harvest Moon – one of the largest producers and processors of cool-climate vegetables in Australia.

Using a multi-species cover crop during autumn and winter helps to:

- Protect the soil from raindrop impact and surface crusting, preventing surface runoff and erosion
- Maintain living roots in the soil, producing exudates which feed beneficial microorganisms and increase soil biological activity
- Maintain and improve desirable soil structural, biological and fertility attributes



Cradle Coast NRM's Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator Tom O'Malley discusses preliminary results of the multi-species cover crop demonstration with Harvest Moon staff

Background:

Harvest Moon are a large-scale fresh vegetable grower, growing roughly 70,000 tons of carrots, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, beans, swede, and beetroot annually in and around the township of Forth in northern Tasmania and sites in NSW, VIC and QLD. Harvest Moon have been integrating broadscale multi-species cover crops between vegetable cash crops and are recognising the value in their production systems.



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