

The Forever Green Initiative

Developing perennial and winter-annual agricultural crops

2026 Minnesota legislative session • Friends of the Mississippi River



By investing in the Forever Green Initiative we can harness the power of “continuous living cover” agriculture to protect our state’s natural resources while increasing the efficiency, profitability and productivity of Minnesota’s farmers.

The [Forever Green Initiative](#) (FGI) at the University of Minnesota develops perennial and winter-annual crops that protect soil and water while driving new economic opportunities for growers, industry and communities.

The [FGI portfolio](#) includes over 15 crop development platforms, each supported by a team with expertise in genomics, breeding, agronomics, natural resource sciences, end use sciences, sociology, economics and commercialization. Uniquely, FGI combines basic research with crop commercialization efforts in a comprehensive approach that moves new crops out of the lab and onto the landscape, where they can make a difference for society.

A win-win: The economic and environmental impacts

Forever Green crops diversify economic opportunities for Minnesota’s farmers through the production of new sources of food, feed and high-value biomaterials like low-carbon fuel, in ways that complement current annual production systems. A farmer could grow winter camelina on the same land as soybeans, for example, and see a net increase in oil per acre (as much as 50%).

In addition, combining Forever Green crops with traditional annual crops in this way can keep the soil covered all year round. Farming with such “continuous living cover” can greatly enhance the efficiency and sustainability of Minnesota agriculture. [A 2023 analysis](#) found this approach could boost on-farm profits by 20%, while reducing losses of nitrate (-23%) and sediment (-35%) and improving the ag sector’s carbon footprint.

The importance of stable funding

Stable and robust state funding allows Forever Green to pursue longer-term projects, retain key researchers, and purchase and maintain critical equipment and physical infrastructure to support breeding, agronomic research and food science activities.

Forever Green is a win-win for our farmers, our economy, our rural communities and our environment.

Benefits of Forever Green crops and continuous living cover:

More efficient, productive acres: Farmers could grow harvestable, marketable crops on the same land throughout the year.

Diversified crop portfolios and farm income streams, leading to **enhanced farm profits**.

More investments in new rural agricultural industries.

Cleaner water, including drinking water sources (such as aquifers) and treasured rivers, lakes and streams.

Healthier, **more resilient soil** that stays on the landscape.

Enhanced wildlife and pollinator **habitat**.

Reduced emissions.

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