



CREATE YOUR OWN COVER CROP COMMERCIAL

GRADES 6-12

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Imagine that you are part of a company that sells cover crop seed. Your goal is to sell your product, cover crops, to farmers. Your group will be tasked with creating a commercial for cover crops that appeals to farmers in Iowa. Think about what information a farmer might want to know so that he or she can make a purchasing decision for the farm. Consider how the product should be presented to the audience and what kind of marketing strategy might be the most effective for your purposes. Students will work in groups of 4-5 to create their own commercial that would air on TV in a 30 second spot.



[WATCH SLOW JAM - COVER CROPS](#)

PROCEDURE

1. Discuss general marketing concepts with your students – emotional appeal, logical appeal, ethical appeal, etc. Consider how some advertising uses humor, song, story-telling, repetition, urgency or testimonials to be effective.

Resources:

[Common persuasive techniques](#) used in media and advertising

[Video on persuasive techniques](#) in advertising – focusing on pathos, logos and ethos with visual examples

[Examples of Super Bowl commercial strategies](#)

2. Assign each group of students a cover crop type (grasses, brassicas or legumes). Have each group research a few key questions about their target audience and product.

Key questions about target audience (Iowa farmers):

- Age range, gender, income, ethnic background, marital status, family status, geographic location
- What techniques will we use to get and hold their attention?
- What do we want them to know about our product?

Key questions about cover crops:

- Benefits of cover crops (list at least 3)
- What benefits are unique to or especially good for this cover crop type?
- What are some examples of this type of cover crop?
- How would a farmer use this cover crop? What else might they need to consider when using it?
- What would a farmer who saw your commercial want to know about your product?

Resources:

Cover Crops: [Grasses](#)

Cover Crops: [Brassicas](#)

Cover Crops: [Legumes](#)

[Cover crops infographic](#)

[NY Times article](#) on cover crops and a few farmers who use them

Conservation Chat Podcasts on cover crops and a few farmers who use them

[Paul and Nancy Ackley Talk Cover Crops](#)

[Sally Hollis of Lanehaven Farms Talks Cover Crops](#)

[Conservation Pays: Farmer Rick Juchems with his daughter Liz](#)

[Rob Stout: Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awardee](#)

3. Each team will work together to create a 30 second commercial for cover crops. Storyboarding or script writing within groups can help students organize ideas. For the final product, each group will briefly act out their commercial with the aid of props, narration, music and/or other technology. Have a classmate film each commercial on a tablet, cell phone or other electronic device. Set a date for your classroom's Cover Crop Film Festival and use the point matrix on the following page for both students and teachers to rate each commercial.
4. Following the activity, talk as a class about conservation decisions, farming and marketing. In real life, what are some ways that products are marketed to farmers? What similarities do you notice about marketing strategies used for agricultural products? What kind of advertising techniques would be most effective to reach farmers? Have you seen or heard ads for conservation? If not, why not?
5. Have students watch the following "commercials" made by Water Rocks!. Have them use the point matrix to rate each commercial. Do you think this type of commercial for conservation would be effective to reach out to farmers? Why or why not?

Restless Tillage Syndrome: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8XA18KbWDA>

Cover Crop Vaccine: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9OW7f_I3UM

Variable Rate Technology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-GwYvfzMzg>

COVER CROP COMMERCIAL POINT MATRIX

Criteria	3	2	1	Your Score
Content	Commercial contains 3 or more benefits or selling points of cover crops	Commercial contains 2 benefits or selling points of cover crops	Commercial contains 1 or fewer benefits or selling points of cover crops	
Creativity and Props	Students use several props, costumes or effects that add to the commercial and message	Students use one prop, costume or effect that adds to the commercial and message	Students use no prop, costume or effect OR the items detract from the commercial and message	
Messaging and Consumer Motivation	The message of the commercial is clear and clearly motivates people to buy the product	The message of the commercial is somewhat clear and could motivate people to buy the product	The message of the commercial is unclear and does not motivate people to buy the product	
Advertising Technique	The commercial incorporates more than one advertising technique and makes use of a slogan or jingle	The commercial incorporates one advertising technique or makes use of a slogan or jingle	The commercial does not incorporate any advertising techniques, slogans or jingles	
Use of Time	Commercial was within 2 seconds of the 30 second time frame	Commercial was 3 to 4 seconds off of the 30 second time frame	Commercial was 5 seconds or more off of the 30 second time frame	