

# Cover Crop Adoption

## Research Summary

### Overview:

This study examined cover crop adoption barriers among 32 experienced New Zealand horticultural growers (average 23 years cover crop experience) across five regions to identify strategic research and policy investment priorities. Using quantitative Importance scoring and qualitative analysis, the research provides evidence-based recommendations for maximising adoption impact.

### Methodology:

First, a literature review was carried out to identify international research that can be applied to NZ conditions.

Second, research was conducted into perceptions of cover cropping in NZ.

- Sample: 32 growers across Canterbury, Hawke's Bay, Pukekohe, Manawatu, Gisborne
- Data Collection: questionnaires administered by agronomists using 5-pt scale
- Quantitative Analysis: Mean scores calculated
- Qualitative Analysis: themes identified from open-ended questions
- Analytical Framework: three-tier classification system developed based on mean scores

### Key Findings

#### Top 5 Barriers:

1. Establishment Reliability
2. Ease of termination
3. Pest/disease increase risk
4. Nitrogen immobilisation
5. Disease green-bridge risk

- Experience doesn't eliminate barriers
- Operational timing is #1 implementation challenge
- Biological risk management is central

#### Species Performance

- Highly recommended
  - oats, annual ryegrass, vetch, barley
- Use with caution:
  - rye, brassicas, complex mixes, clover

**Research Partner:** LandWISE

**Collaborators:** Charles Merfield, Andrew Luxmoore, Karen Coleman, Chris Lambert

