



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Vermont
October 2025

Conservation Practice Overview

Soil Carbon Amendment (Code 336)

Soil Carbon Amendments (SCA) are materials derived from plant materials or treated animal byproducts.

These amendments may be applied to the soil to improve or maintain soil organic matter, sequester carbon and enhance soil carbon stocks, improve soil aggregate stability, and/or improve habitat for soil organisms.



Practice Information

Soil carbon amendments consisting of compost, biochar, and other carbon-based materials may be added to improve existing soil conditions. Soils of the planning unit should be evaluated using the most current planning criteria, field assessments, and benchmark soil tests.

Materials used as soil carbon amendments should be created by approved methods. An appropriate laboratory analysis of the material is necessary to determine application rates and if there are any inherent chemical limitations.

Apply soil carbon amendments on planning units avoiding sensitive areas. Consider crop sequence, temperature, and slope. Consider the nutrient content within the amendment to avoid negative impacts on air, water, plant, or nutrient cycling.

Operation and maintenance of the soil carbon amendment practice includes calibration of distribution equipment, monitoring crop health following applications, inspection of fields following precipitation events to ensure material is staying in place and completing soil health tests after the first application and then in subsequent years to monitor changes in soil carbon levels and other soil health indicators.

Common Associated Practices

Soil Carbon Amendment (336) is commonly applied with practices such as Nutrient Management (590); Conservation Crop Rotation (328); Cover Crop (340); Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329), Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345), and Critical Area Planting (342).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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