

RESIDUE MANAGEMENT, SEASONAL

CODE (344)

SPECIFICATIONS GUIDELINES

Retention Dates

Non-Highly Erodible Cropland

As the practice name implies, Residue Management, Seasonal is designed to protect the soil's surface from sheet and rill erosion and control sediment delivery during critical times of the year. In Louisiana, a minimum of 30 percent cover of any combination of crop remains and/or volunteer vegetation shall be visible and measurable on the soil surface from harvest until the end of the residue management period. The following are the earliest dates for beginning seedbed preparation on **non-highly erodible cropland**.

Rice-----	January 15
Corn-----	February 15
Grain Sorghum-----	February 15
Cotton-----	February 15
Soybeans-----	February 15
Sugarcane-----	February 15
Oats-----	September 1
Wheat-----	September 1
Rye-----	September 1
Ryegrass-----	September 1

Highly Erodible Cropland

When Crop Residue Management, Seasonal, is required as part of a Resource Management System (RMS) or Progressive Conservation Plan on highly erodible cropland, the retention period shall be extended beyond the dates listed above. This system is commonly referred to as Delayed Seedbed Preparation.

In delayed seedbed systems, crop residue and volunteer vegetation shall be maintained on the soil surface until 3 weeks before the succeeding crop in the rotation is planted or until April 1 for sugarcane stubble being destroyed. A minimum of 30 percent ground cover from either crop residue, volunteer vegetation, or cover crops shall be visible and measurable on the soil surface from harvest of the previous crop until approximately 3 weeks prior to planting. All other criteria contained in these specifications apply to delayed seedbed systems except the retention dates for non-highly erodible cropland.

In cases where cover crops or volunteer vegetation produce large amounts of biomass which might not decompose sufficiently during the 3 week period prior to planting, it is

permissible to kill the vegetation with approved pre-plant herbicides earlier, provided soil disturbing operations are delayed until 3 weeks prior to normal planting dates.

Soil Disturbance

General

Since some crops produce large amounts of non-fragile residue (corn/grain sorghum) and some implements leave a significant amount of residue on the soil surface, a light full-width tillage operation may be performed following harvest as long as 30 percent of the residue is visible and measurable immediately following the soil disturbing operation.

Residue burial percentages for one pass of an implement can be found in the Operations Databases contained in the RUSLE 2 computer program.

Stale Seedbed Systems

Stale seedbed systems are widely used in Louisiana. Typically, old beds are re-hipped in the fall immediately following harvest and treated with at least one pre-plant herbicide prior to planting in the spring. Planting is accomplished without any spring pre-plant tillage. In Louisiana, re-hipping of old beds shall be limited to one pass of a hipper, bedder, disk-hiller, middle buster or similar implement immediately following harvest of non-fragile high-residue producing crops but no later than **November 1. If 30 percent cover is not visible and measurable by December 1, a cover (see Cover Crop, 340) shall be planted no later than December 15.**

Rice

Where fall tillage is performed on rice land and less than 30 percent cover is left on the field following tillage, rice levees shall be closed immediately and remain closed until a 30 percent cover of volunteer vegetation has developed inside the levees. Once 30 percent cover of volunteer vegetation has developed, levees may be reopened and the cover shall be managed until the above specified retention date.

Burning

Burning of sugarcane residue is recognized by the LSU Agricultural Center as one of several options for protecting ratoon crops from stand reductions and associated loss in yields. When burning of sugarcane fields is necessary, burning shall be conducted according to the Louisiana Smoke Management Guidelines for Harvesting Sugarcane published by the LSU Agricultural Center.