

Conservation Planning Guidance for EQIP Specialty Crop Practices

Background: The contracting basis for 2008 EQIP specialty crop management practices is NC conservation practice 595, Pest Management, or 484, Mulching. Cost-sharing amounts for these practices are found under the 595 or 484 practice code in the 2008 EQIP cost-list. However, to validate the purpose of contracts in EQIP or other conservation program, a sound conservation plan that is the record of client decisions as well as the technical foundation of the contract must be developed and implemented. Therefore, there may be other facilitating or supporting practices that should be included in the conservation plan that will ensure the viability of the conservation management system that is intended by the implementation of cost-sharing practices within the contract. It is also important to have quality practice narratives on all practices selected for the plan. Questions have arisen as to which practices should be selected during plan development for these practices, so the following is some guidance on what may be included in conservation plans that support the resulting EQIP contract. Planners are reminded that NRCS conservation planning policy supports progressive planning, but requires that participants be made aware of practices needed to meet the RMS level of planning and implementation. See Section III of the eFOTG for more information on practices that must be included in conservation plans for specific land uses to meet the RMS-level of planning. These planning options are just a start, it is the responsibility if the planner to assess resource concerns on the planning area and include the practices that address those resource concerns in the plan.

- ***Row covers for Strawberries***
 1. 484 (Mulching—plan required--Progressive)
 2. 595 (Pest Management—plan supporting—RMS)
 3. 449 (Irrigation Water Management—plan supporting--RMS)
 4. 590 (Nutrient Management—plan supporting--RMS)
 5. 328 (Conservation Crop Rotation—plan supporting--RMS)
 6. 344 or 329 (Residue Management--plan supporting--RMS)
 7. 340 (Cover Crop—plan supporting--RMS)

- ***IPM Reduced Risk Strategy for Sweet Potatoes***
 1. 595 (Pest Management—plan required--Progressive)
 2. 328 (Conservation Crop Rotation—plan supporting--RMS)
 3. 340 (Cover Crop—plan supporting--RMS)
 4. 344 or 329 (Residue Management,—plan supporting--RMS)
 5. 590 (Nutrient Management—plan supporting--RMS)

- ***Reduced-risk alternative fumigants to methyl bromide***
 1. 595 (Pest Management—plan required--Progressive)
 2. 590 (Nutrient Management—plan supporting--RMS)
 3. 328 (Conservation Cropping Sequence—plan supporting--RMS)
 4. 344 or 329 (Residue Management—plan supporting—RMS)
 5. 340 (Cover Crop—plan supporting--RMS)

- ***Reduced-risk alternative fumigants to methyl bromide PLUS cover crop/chemigation system***
 1. 595 (Pest Management—plan required--Progressive)
 2. 340 (Cover crop—plan required--Progressive)
 3. 344 or 329 (Residue Management,—plan supporting--RMS)
 4. 441 (Irrigation System, Microirrigation—plan supporting--RMS)
 5. 449 (Irrigation Water Management—plan supporting--RMS)
 6. 590 (Nutrient Management—plan supporting--RMS)

- **Reduced-risk alternatives to methyl bromide—VIF Tarping**
 1. 595 (Pest Management—plan required--Progressive)
 2. 484 (Mulching—plan required--Progressive)
 3. 590 (Nutrient Management—plan supporting--RMS)
 4. 328 (Conservation Crop Rotation—plan supporting--RMS)
 5. 340 (Cover crop—plan supporting--RMS)
 6. 344 or 329 (Residue Management,—plan supporting--RMS)

Note: All partnership employees are required to develop conservation plans, however, PLANNERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST HAVE PROPER JOB APPROVAL AUTHORITY TO DESIGN AND/OR CERTIFY CONSERVATION PRACTICES

***Suggested narratives for required practices:* All the following narratives will be included in TOOLKIT once planner RELOADS DOMAIN DATA. These narratives should be tailored to reflect planning conditions in your specific location!**

595 Pest Management (IPM for Sweet Potatoes)—Implement a Pest Management plan (use the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet) in order to minimize the negative impacts of pest control on natural resources. An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy using a system of scouting, soil incorporated insecticides, and reduced-risk pesticide application will be implemented annually where sweet potatoes are produced. This IPM strategy will reduce adverse impacts of ineffective foliar pesticide applications on water quality and non-targeted organisms. Detailed instructions for execution of the IPM strategy are included in the EQIP Practice Guidelines attachment to the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet.

595 Pest Management (Reduced-risk fumigant to methyl bromide)—Implement a Pest Management Plan (use the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet) in order to minimize the negative impacts of pest control on natural resources. A reduced-risk alternative fumigant to methyl bromide will be utilized on locations where fumigated fruits and vegetables are produced in order to eliminate the atmospheric ozone depletion impacts and soil biocide impacts of methyl bromide. Detailed instructions for use of reduced-risk fumigants are included in the EQIP practice guidelines attachment to the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet.

OR for chemigation method with no fall fumigation (add if applicable):

Implement a Pest Management Plan (use the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet) in order to minimize the negative impacts of pest control on natural resources. Utilize a spring alternative reduced-risk fumigant treatment (specify Inline or metam sodium/potassium product) through additional drip irrigation line after plant beds “warm” approximately 21 days prior to planting. Alternative fumigants to methyl bromide are used to eliminate the atmospheric ozone depletion impacts and soil biocide impacts of methyl bromide. Detailed instructions for use of reduced-risk fumigants are included in the EQIP practice guidelines attachment to the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet.

595 Pest Management (VIF Tarping)—Implement a Pest Management plan (use the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet) to reduce the negative impacts of pest control on natural resources. Virtually Impermeable Film or equivalent metallic-type film will be installed annually at locations shown on the conservation plan map in order to reduce soil-to-atmosphere methyl bromide gas flow through increased gas retention and use

efficiency. Methyl bromide application rate must be at least 25% lower than the maximum labeled rate for the fruit or vegetable crop produced. Detailed instructions on the installation and maintenance of this tarping are included in the EQIP practice guidelines attachment to the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet.

340 Cover Crop (Cover crop and chemigation management system w/methyl bromide alternatives)—A system of cover crop establishment between fruit/vegetable beds and at row ends will be implemented annually for three years in order to reduce erosion and surface runoff that can degrade soil and water quality. Cover crops (*note variety here from Table 1 in EQIP guidelines*) will be established between beds immediately after bed formation and left in place for a minimum of 3 months to allow for crop maturity that will result in increased soil organic matter content. Detailed instructions on the establishment and “knock-down” of cover crops are included in attached EQIP practice guidelines

484 Mulching (Row covers)-- Row cover mulching will be installed for 3 growing seasons as specified in the attached EQIP Practice Guidelines to reduce the dependence on sprinkler irrigation for frost/freezing protection, thus reducing surface runoff of eroded soil particles and adsorbed pesticides. Covers will be spun-bonded woven material weighing at least 1 oz/sq yd and installed in locations shown on the conservation plan map between Nov 15 and Dec 15. Detailed instructions for establishment and maintenance of row covers are included in the EQIP 484 practice guidelines.

484 Mulching (VIF Tarping)-- Virtually Impermeable Film or equivalent metallic-type film will be installed as mulching annually at locations shown on the conservation plan map in order to reduce soil-to-atmosphere methyl bromide gas flow through increased gas retention and use efficiency. Methyl bromide application rate must be at least 25% lower than the maximum labeled rate for the fruit or vegetable crop produced. Detailed instructions on the installation and maintenance of this mulching are included in the EQIP practice guidelines attachment to the 595 Pest Management Job Sheet.