

NRCS FARM BILL PROGRAM
2012 Practice Implementation Sheet
Cover Crop (340.2 & 340.3)
Dead Litter Cover Crop/Non-Legume Cover Crop

Farm Bill Program Participant

Contract Number

Purpose: Growing non-legume crops (grasses only) for seasonal cover. This practice may be used to reduce wind and water erosion, increase soil organic matter, promote soil biological diversity, or for weed and other pest suppression in organic or conventional cropping systems. This practice may also be used to aid in the establishment of perennial vegetation.



- Where applicable, cover crops will be irrigated sufficiently to achieve the intended purposes.
- All species will be planted within the recommended planting dates, at the recommended planting rates and depths.
- Planted species will be adapted to the soil and climate as determined by the Field Office Technical Guide.
- The practice, when applied alone (not part of a crop rotation) must control soil erosion to the soil tolerance (T) level.
- Cover crops may be terminated by mowing, tillage, crimping, or approved herbicides in preparation for the next crop.
- Mixed seedings of different species are not required, but may be encouraged. Seeding rates of mixed plantings will be done proportionately at the discretion of the conservation planner.
- The practice will not be eligible in areas receiving less than 25 inches of annual rainfall unless irrigated (other than for dead litter cover).

NRCS will:

- Assist participants in preparing a plan for planting including species selection, planting rates, and dates.
- Utilize the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2) and Wind Erosion Equation (WEQ) as appropriate, to insure that soil losses resulting from the cover crop or planned rotation are at tolerance levels are below.
- Measure and certify planted acres upon receiving confirmation that the practice has been completed.

Participant will:

- Ensure that the requirements of the National organic Program (NOP) will be followed for implementation of this practice if part of an organic system.
- Plant adapted species at proper rates within designated planting dates.
- Notify the NRCS of any previous herbicide use which may inhibit seedling germination/development.
- Notify NRCS when shredding (to prevent seeding), tillage, or other termination procedures are planned.
- Haying or grazing will be managed to maintain sufficient residues or growing crop on the land to keep soil erosion at or below soil loss tolerances.
- Provide the NRCS with all bills associated with the practice including seedbed preparation, seed costs/amounts, and seeding operation.
- If this practice is part of an organic system, provide the NRCS with a copy of the Organic System Plan (if already certified). For non-certified organic acres, a producer “self certification” letter must be signed stating the producer’s intent to become a certified organic operation.

*****Annual implementation will be considered complete and payment made when the cover crop has fully established and all requested seeding documentation (*INCLUDING BILLS AND SEED TAGS*) has been certified by NRCS.**

I have read this Cover Crop fact sheet and my questions concerning the practice implementation have been answered. I understand that failure to follow the practice standard, this fact sheet, and the contract provisions could jeopardize any and all payments.

Participant Signature

Date