

Basic Winter Cover Crop Job Sheet For Small
 Grains: Cereal Rye

Participant Name _____

Date: _____

**INFORMATION ON THIS JOB SHEET IS
 CONSIDERED TO BE PART OF THE
 CONTRACT AND/OR CONSERVATION
 PLAN.**



Purpose

This job sheet will be used to establish cover crops for the explicit purpose of keeping crop fields in a growing cover at times when fields would otherwise be bare or fallow for more than 30 days. The main purpose of this activity is to prevent soil erosion and the runoff of chemicals and fertilizers into surface waters. Cereal rye is the cover crop species of choice due to its; biomass production, root mass, and alleopathic qualities. Other small grains may be used in place of cereal rye on a case by case basis with the approval of the NRCS State Agronomist.

Conditions Where Practice Applies

On all lands where vegetative cover for natural resource protection and or improvement is desired. Cover crops are particularly useful in improving and protecting the soil resource base by providing live vegetative cover during periods when no crops are present in fields.

Establishment Specifications

1. Plant species (cereal rye preferred) and seeding rates will be according to Table 1.

2. Seed will conform to minimum state standards for purity, germination and other features. Commercially marketed seed in Kentucky meets these requirements. **Organic producers should ensure the use of organic seed when available. Contact State Organic Certifier for more information.**

Seeding and Seedbed Preparation

Important: If soil is wet, avoid no-till planting or cultipacking planted seedbeds. This may result in placing the seed too deep.

No-till establishment is the preferred method since soil disturbance is minimal, thus reducing weed competition and the risk of soil erosion. Conventional seeding may be used for establishment on areas that have been recently cropped, where weedy competition will be lessened and where the risk of soil erosion is minimal.

Seeding Dates

Cover crops should be sown from September 1st through October 15th. Early September seeding dates are preferred.

No-Till Seeding

Care should be exercised when setting drills to ensure that planting depths and seeding rates are correct for the species planted.

Conventional Seeding

The importance of a dry firm seedbed cannot be over emphasized to ensure proper planting depth.

Seedbeds may be prepared by disking.

Once seedbed is prepared, broadcast seed, cultipack, harrow or roll the seeded area only once to ensure good seed to soil contact and the proper seeding depth.

Aerial Seeding

Seeding rates must be increased by a minimum of 25% for all cover crop seed species to insure adequate stand.

When possible, aerial seeding should be performed over an existing crop before leaves of the existing crop fall to the ground. (Example: Aerial sow cover crop over soybeans prior to fall of soybean foliage.)

Operation and Maintenance

Cover crop growth will be terminated by chemical burn down.

