



CT NRCS Cover Crop - 340

Conservation Practice Job Sheet		<i>Lifespan – 1 year</i>	
Producer:		Location:	
Farm, Tract and Field(s):		Planner:	
Program:		Date:	



Definition

Crops including grasses, legumes, and forbs for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes.

Purpose

- Reduce erosion from wind and water.
- Increase soil organic matter content.
- Capture and recycle or redistribute nutrients in the soil profile.
- Promote biological nitrogen fixation and reduce energy use.
- Increase biodiversity.
- Suppress weeds.
- Manage soil moisture.
- Minimize and reduce soil compaction

Where Used

All lands requiring vegetative cover for natural resource protection and or improvement.

Resource Management System

A Resource Management System is a combination of conservation practices and resource management, for the

treatment of all identified resource concerns for soil, water, air, plants and animals, within a conservation management or planning unit that meets or exceeds the quality criteria in the Field Office Technical Guide for resource sustainability. Cover Crops are applied as part of Conservation Management Systems for a wide range of land uses. Cover Crops are often planned with Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345), Nutrient Management (590) and Integrated Pest Management (595).

Criteria, Considerations, and Specifications

The Criteria, Considerations, and Specifications for this practice shall be in concurrence with CT Field Office Technical Guide and the CT Conservation Practice Standard for this practice.

Additional guidance may be found in published Field Crops Guides, or

Agronomy Guides for Northeastern Penn State, and Cornell University. Other useful planning references include the **Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide** by the Midwest Cover Crop Council (<http://www.mccc.msu.edu/>) and **Managing Cover Crops for Profitability** by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (www.sare.org).

The following elements will be addressed in the plan to meet the intended purpose:

- Site preparation
- Fertilizer application (if applicable)
- Methods of planting
- Dates of planting
- Selection of species
- Type of legume inoculant used (if applicable)
- Seed/Plant source
- Seed analysis
- Rates of seeding/planting
- Termination time and method.

Crop Insurance Eligibility

To comply with crop insurance eligibility, be sure to understand when the cover must be terminated to maintain insurance coverage. Connecticut is in Zone 4. This zone requires cover crop termination at, or within, five days after planting the cash crop. Cover crops must be terminated before seed emergence and must not interfere with the growth of the cash crop in order to maintain crop insurance eligibility. Please refer to the **NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines** for more information.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/PA_NRCSCo nsumption/download?cid=stelprdb1241229 &ext=pdf or available at the CT eFOTG (electronic Field Office Technical Guide) <http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. It can be found in Section IV under Conservation Practices, Cover Crop (340).

Certification

Producer should communicate with NRCS prior to and during implementation activities.

states, such as the guides published by Documentation by NRCS staff of proper management or customer's records shall be used for certification of this practice.

Examples of Basic Cover Crop Seed Mixes:

Single species (winter cover) – planted before Sept. 30

- winter rye - either:
 - 90 lbs/ac drilled OR
 - 110 lbs/ac broadcast

Single species (summer cover) – planted before July 15

- 45 lbs/ac sorghum-sudan grass

Legume Soil Health - planted before Sept. 15

- 50 lbs winter rye
- 8 lbs hairy vetch
- 5 lbs red clover

5 species Soil Health - planted before Aug. 31

- 50 lbs winter rye
- 2 lbs daikon radish
- 4 lbs sorghum-sudan grass
- 2 lbs red clover
- 5 lbs hairy vetch

Advanced cover crop mixes should be created specific for the farm to address the resource concern identified. Each mix should be crafted:

- to the resource concern;
- to the crop;
- to the farm
- and to the field.

Calculate how many seeds per square foot. Determine what each plant is going to do for the soil, what the canopy will look like, its root structure, and any potential problems with carry-over to the next cash crop.

Please refer to *Managing Cover Crops for Profitably* (SARE 2010) for possibilities or other cover crop guides. There are also a variety of seed mix calculators available online. Ensure the cover crop seed mixture does not include noxious and/or invasive species.

Cover Crop Plan

Designed By:
Job Title:

Date:

Purpose:

<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce erosion from wind and water	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase soil organic matter content	<input type="checkbox"/> Capture and recycle or redistribute nutrients in the soil profile	<input type="checkbox"/> Promote biological nitrogen fixation and reduce energy use
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase biodiversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Suppress weeds	<input type="checkbox"/> Manage soil moisture	<input type="checkbox"/> Minimize and reduce surface soil compaction
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimize and reduce subsurface soil compaction	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Fields Planned for Cover Crop:

Field(s)	Planting Method	Planting Date	Species Seeding Rate-Seed Mix (PLS)	Total Planting Rate (PLS/ac)	Acres	Total Seed Needed (PLS)	Termination Date or Stage and Method

No Federally-listed noxious plants or species on the Connecticut list of invasive and potentially invasive plant shall be planted. The most recent updates to the list are maintained by the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (www.cipwg.uconn.edu) invasive plants profile list.

FERTILITY: Apply lime and fertilizer as needed, according to soil test recommendations.

Refer to attached Conservation Plan Map(s) for location of area(s) to be planted with cover crops.

Additional Criteria for Installation:

Note: Any changes to this plan must be approved by the NRCS representative managing the project.

Concurrence of Participant:	
Participant	Date

Plan Certification:	
NRCS	Date

Cover Crop (340) Job Sheet Practice Checkout

Field(s)	Planting Method	Planting Date	Species Seeding Rate-Seed Mix (PLS/ac)	Acres	Total Seed Planted	Additional Notes – e.g. fertilizer applied (type, nutrients and rate)

Checkout Notes:

Practice Certification Statement:

I have inspected the implementation of this practice and certify that it has been implemented according to the practice standard and the specifications in this job sheet.

Certified by:	Title:	Date
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