



February 6, 2015

## KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS450-15-1

### SUBJECT: TCH—Revised Cover Crop Termination Guidelines

**Purpose:** To provide the revised “NRCS Cropland Cover Crop Termination Guidelines—September 2014, Version 3” document to all offices

**Expiration Date:** September 30, 2016

The “NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines—September 2014, Version 3” revised the following:

**Grazing Consideration: Cover Crop Grazing or Forage Harvest—**Cover crops may be grazed or harvested as hay or silage, unless prohibited by Risk Management Agency (RMA) crop insurance policy provisions. Cover crops cannot be harvested for grain or seed.

**Definition of Cover Crop:** Crops, including grasses, legumes, and forbs for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes. Cover crops are primarily used for erosion control, soil health improvement, and water quality improvement. A cover crop managed and terminated according to these guidelines is not considered a “crop” for crop insurance purposes. The cover crop may be terminated by natural causes such as frost, or intentionally terminated through chemical application, crimping, rolling, tillage, or cutting.

**Definition of Termination:** Termination means growth has ended.

The revised “NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines—September 2014, Version 3” specifically added the following:

*It should be noted that in Kansas, wheat is the only crop that has the RMA summer fallow practice available.*

**Consideration #13: RMA’s Summer Fallow Practice—**If a crop or a cover crop is planted on summer fallow wheat acreage in a fallow year, the following planted crop will not meet the RMA Summer Fallow Practice definition until the acres lie fallow for a full crop year. For the 2015 crop year, if a cover crop was planted during the fallow year, the acreage may be insured under the “continuous cropping practice” (if available in your county), or by written agreement (if continuous cropping is not available in your county).

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For the 2016 and succeeding crop years, if a cover crop is planted during the fallow year, the acreage may be insured under the “continuous cropping practice” (if available in your county), or by written agreement (if continuous cropping is not available in your county) provided the cover crop is terminated at least 90 days prior to planting for summer and fall seeded crops. For early spring seeded crops, terminate the cover crop in the fall or as early as possible in the spring. Please contact your crop insurance agent for more information.

For those counties that have RMA-designated summer fallow practice for wheat, Consideration #13 is critical to know and understand. In Kansas, wheat is the only crop that has the summer fallow practice. To qualify for RMA’s summer fallow practice for the current crop year, the acreage must not have been planted to a crop the preceding crop year and shall lie fallow for a full crop year. Therefore, when wheat producers utilize cover crops during the fallow year, the next year’s wheat crop will not qualify for the summer fallow practice. However, that wheat crop may still be insured under continuous cropping practice, if available in that county. If the continuous cropping is not available in that county, then the producer can request a WA (see paragraph below for more information). Also, beginning with the 2016 crop year, in order for the wheat to be insurable either under the continuous cropping practice (if available in that county) or by WA (if continuous cropping is not available), the cover crops must be terminated at least 90 days prior to planting wheat.

Note: If the producer farms in a county where the only non-irrigated practice is the summer fallow practice (i.e., 9 counties in southwest Kansas), they may obtain insurance for their 2015 wheat only via WA, provided the cover crop meets the criteria outlined in the special provisions of their county **and the cover crop is not hayed, grazed, or otherwise harvested** (as stated in the county’s actuarial documents).

It is important that producers interested in exploring how cover crops can fit into their farming operations be encouraged to look over the actuarial documents in their county and discuss all available options with their crop insurance agent. For additional information on crop insurance and cover crops, please refer to the frequently asked questions on the RMA’s website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/help/faq/>. Again, please have producers refer their questions on cover crops and crop insurance to their crop insurance agent.

*Disclaimer: the information in this document does not replace or supersede any procedures or modify any provisions contained in complete crop insurance policies.*

Cover Crop Termination Guidelines September 2014 Version 3 is located in Section I of the Field Office Technical Guide in the Cover Crop Termination Guidelines folder for the Jun 30, 2015, contract change date. These are in effect for producers that planted wheat this fall and for crops planted next 2015.

*(signed)*

ERIC B. BANKS  
State Conservationist