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Service

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**October 31, 2014**

**TECHNICAL GUIDE  
NOTICE #267 (electronic)**

**Purpose:** To transmit information regarding the electronic NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG).

**Effective Date:** This notice is effective upon receipt.

**Notice of Changes**

**SECTION IV. Practice Standards and Specifications**

Changes were made to the following **agronomy** conservation practice standards (CPSs) to reflect changes in the national CPSs:

**Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329) NOTE NAME CHANGE**

1. Calculated STIR value for No till is reduced from 30 to 20 or less
2. Use the OSUE SOM Calculator to predict SOM trend when residue is removed for bio-energy
3. Goal to claim reduced energy use is set at a 25% reduction to the Benchmark CMS. See the 2014 (Field Office 014) Moses database in RUSLE 2 to calculate all energy use from ground (tillage) and non-ground engaging tools. All management templates now include non-ground engaging operations: i.e. (spraying, broadcast fertilizer, etc.) All single year management templates can be modified and saved in the RUSLE 2 C folder for local Field office use.
4. NO till used by Organic producers must be consistent with the management practices in the USDA AMS National Organic Program standards.
5. Tillage to close or level ruts is limited to 25% of the field

**Seasonal Residue Management (344) RETIRED. Incorporated into 345 Reduced Tillage Standard**

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DIST: All Holders of the Field Office Technical Guide

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**Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Tillage (345) replaces Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till (345) and Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till (346)  
NEW!**

1. Mulch tillage 345 is now Reduced tillage 345
2. Added new resource concern Air Quality Impacts
3. Added resource concern- Maintain or increase soil quality and organic matter content
4. Calculated STIR has to be 80 or less for the CMS
5. Ridge till standard (346) is retired. Ridge till added to new 345 RTM Reduced Tillage Standard
6. Updated 345 job sheet single page with specifications recommended and new name
7. Seasonal Residue Management (344) standard is now part of (345).

**Field Border (386)**

1. Additional Criteria: Provide Wildlife Food and Cover and Pollinator or other Beneficial Organism Habitat Combined and changed.
2. Several Considerations added for planning cover crops in Organic System Plans
3. Several hot links added in References to Organic Websites
4. Deleted Purpose to Manage Pest Populations

**Mulching (484)**

1. No longer a purpose: "Use to suppress or control weeds in Organic Systems", however, with compost etc. can be used to increase Soil Organic Matter.

**Deep Tillage (324)**

1. Eliminated the following Criteria: Additional criteria to reduce concentrations of soil contaminants which inhibit plant growth".
2. Specified two new resource concerns under Purpose: 1/ Degraded Plant Condition and 2/ Soil Quality Degradation.
3. Added Additional Criteria to Burry or Mix Soil Deposits from Wind and Water Erosion or Flood Overwash.
4. Considerations: Other methods that can be used to further spread the load and potentially reduce soil compaction...etc.
5. Percent soil moisture for deep tillage operations has increased from 30 to 30-50 percent of field capacity.

**Filter Strip (393)**

1. Added under Criteria,"What constitutes successful establishment, e.g. minimum percent ground/canopy cover, percent survival and growth of selected species."

2. Eliminated for Michigan: Additional Criteria to Reduce Suspended Solids and Associated Contaminants in Irrigation Tail Water.
3. Several new considerations added related to: Drift, invasive species, organic producers, and wildlife/pollinator benefit, and maintenance in regards to mowing etc.

**Contour Farming (330) No change; adopted the national (330) standard.**

**Stripcropping (585)**

1. New Definition
2. New Criteria: Predictions shall account for the effects of other practices in the CMS.
3. Maximum Row Grade criteria added.
4. Several considerations added: to improve cropping system diversity...consider a 3 year crop rotation verses a 2 year.
5. Consider species and management practices for pollinators, wildlife and or other desired organisms.
6. Consider use for trapping drifting snow.
7. To reduce airborne particulate matter ( PM ) emissions

**Cover Crops (340)**

The national "NRCS Cropland Cover Crop Termination Guidelines" were updated. The revised guidelines (September 2014, Version 3) specifically 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 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.

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