

Practice: 340 - Cover Crop

Scenario: #1 - Soil Protection N Scavenging Cover

Scenario Description: Typically a small grain or small grain-legume mix (may also use forage sorghum, radishes, turnips, buckwheat, etc) will be planted as a cover crop immediately after harvest of a row crop, and will be followed by a row crop that will utilize the residue as a mulch. This scenario assumes that seed will be planted with a drill. The cover crop should be allowed to generate as much biomass as possible, without delaying planting of the following crop. The cover crop will be terminated using an approved herbicide a prior to planting the subsequent crop OR a mechanical kill method. Based on National Cover Crop-Chemical Kill Scenario no changes to national components.

Before Situation: Row crops such as corn, soybeans, or cotton are grown and harvested in mid-late fall. Fields are disked immediately following harvest, with rows in some fields being hipped for drainage. Residue amounts after harvest average 30% or less, resulting in bare soil being exposed to wind erosion and/or intense rainfall during the fall, winter, and early spring. Over the winter residue degrades and sediment/nutrient runoff from fields increases. Sheet and rill erosion occurs with visible rills by spring. Runoff from the fields flows into streams, water courses or other water bodies causing degradation to the receiving waters. Soil health (soil organic matter) declines over time as a result of tillage practices, low residue crops, and long periods of bare soil.

After Situation: Within 30 days after harvest of row crop, fields are planted with a small grain or small grain-legume mix cover crop, typically rye or rye and and clover. The average field size is 40 acres. The cover crop is seeded with a drill. No additional fertilizer is applied with the cover crop. The cover crop provides soil cover by late fall, throughout the winter, and into the early spring. Runoff and erosion are reduced. Wind erosion is reduced by standing residues. The cover crop is terminated with an approved herbicide (OR a mechanical kill method) prior to spring planting as late as feasible to maximize plant biomass production. Over time, soil health is improved due to the additional biomass, ground cover, soil infiltration, and plant diversity introduced to the cropping system. Cover crop residues left on the surface may maximize weed control by increasing allelopathic and mulching effect.

Scenario Feature Measure: Area planted

Scenario Unit: Acre

Scenario Typical Size: 40

Total Scenario Cost: \$3,892.49

Scenario Cost/Unit: \$97.31

Cost Details

Component Name	Id	Description	Unit	Cost	Qty	Total
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Materials

Herbicide, Glyphosate	334	A broad-spectrum, non-selective systemic herbicide. Refer to WIN-PST for product names and active ingredients. Includes materials and shipping only.	Acre	\$15.93	40	\$637.05
Two Species Mix, Cool Season Annual (1 grass and 1 legume)	2314	Cool season annual grass and legume mix. Includes material and shipping only.	Acre	\$54.10	40	\$2,164.15

Equipment Installation

Chemical, ground application	948	Chemical application performed by ground equipment. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$6.09	40	\$243.52
Seeding Operation, No Till/Grass Drill	960	No Till drill or grass drill for seeding. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$21.19	40	\$847.78

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Scenario: #5 - Organic Weed Control Cover Crop

Scenario Description: Typically a small grain or small grain-legume mix (may also use forage sorghum, radishes, turnips, buckwheat, etc) will be planted as a cover crop immediately after harvest of an organically grown crop, and will be followed by an organically grown crop that will utilize the residue as a mulch. This scenario assumes that seed will be planted with a drill. The cover crop should be allowed to generate as much biomass as possible, without delaying planting of the following crop. The cover crop will be terminated using a mechanical kill method (mowing, rolling, undercutting, etc.), prior to planting the subsequent crop. This scenario **REQUIRES** use of Certified Organic Seed.

Before Situation: Organically grown crops such as various vegetable and fruit crops (along with organically produced row crops) are grown and harvested in mid-late fall. Fields are disked immediately following harvest. Residue amounts after harvest average 30% or less, resulting in bare soil being exposed to wind erosion and/or intense rainfall during the fall, winter, and early spring. Over the winter residue degrades and sediment/nutrient runoff from fields increases. Sheet and rill erosion occurs with visible rills by spring. Runoff from the fields flows into streams, water courses or other water bodies causing degradation to the receiving waters. Soil health (soil organic matter) declines over time as a result of tillage practices, low residue crops, and long periods of bare soil.

After Situation: Within 30 days after harvest of organic crop, fields are planted with a small grain-legume mix cover crop, typically rye and clover. The average field size is 25 acres. The cover crop is seeded with a no-till drill. No additional fertilizer is applied with the cover crop. The cover crop provides soil cover by late fall, throughout the winter, and into the early spring. Runoff and erosion are reduced and no rills are visible on the soil surface in the spring. The cover crop is terminated with using a mechanical kill method (mowing, rolling, undercutting, etc.), prior to spring planting as late as feasible to maximize plant biomass production. Over time, soil health is improved due to the additional biomass, ground cover, and plant diversity introduced to the cropping system. Wind erosion is reduced by standing residues. Cover crop residues left on the surface may maximize weed control by increasing allelopathic and mulching effect.

Scenario Feature Measure: Area planted

Scenario Unit: Acre

Scenario Typical Size: 5

Total Scenario Cost: \$702.70

Scenario Cost/Unit: \$140.54

Cost Details

Component Name	Id	Description	Unit	Cost	Qty	Total
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Equipment Installation

Mechanical weed control, Vegetation termination	957	Mechanical operations, Includes: Roller/crimper, mower, shredder, etc. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$20.38	5	\$101.91
Seeding Operation, No Till/Grass Drill	960	No Till drill or grass drill for seeding. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$21.19	5	\$105.97

Materials

Certified Organic, Two Species Mix, Cool Season, Annual Grasses and Legumes	2339	Certified organic cool season annual grass and legume mix. Includes material and shipping only.	Acre	\$98.96	5	\$494.82
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Scenario: #6 - Orchard/Vineyard Annual Cover Crop

Scenario Description: Orchard or Vineyard annual cover crop is planted which is destroyed by field operations occurring spring through fall. Cover crops are used to 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, and minimize and reduce soil compaction. Planted annually in orchards and vineyards. 60% cover crop per acre.

Before Situation: Orchards or vineyards with bare soil between vine/tree rows. Bare soil is exposed to wind erosion and/or intense rainfall during the fall, winter, and early spring. Over the winter sediment/nutrient runoff from orchards/vineyards increases. Sheet and rill erosion occurs with visible rills by spring. Runoff from the fields flows into streams, water courses or other water bodies causing degradation to the receiving waters. Soil health (soil organic matter) declines over time as a result of long periods of bare soil.

After Situation: Orchard or Vineyard areas between vine/tree rows are planted with an annual cover crop mix in the early fall. The cover crops are killed by typical farming operations before the next fall. Cover crop residues are left on the surface. Root systems are left intact in non-tilled systems. Soil quality benefits are accrued by reducing soil erosion, re-establishing soil porosity, and adding organic matter to the soil.

Scenario Feature Measure: Area planted

Scenario Unit: Acre

Scenario Typical Size: 10

Total Scenario Cost: \$752.98

Scenario Cost/Unit: \$75.30

Cost Details

Component Name	Id	Description	Unit	Cost	Qty	Total
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Equipment Installation

Seeding Operation, No Till/Grass Drill	960	No Till drill or grass drill for seeding. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$21.19	10	\$211.94
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Materials

Two Species Mix, Cool Season Annual (1 grass and 1 legume)	2314	Cool season annual grass and legume mix. Includes material and shipping only.	Acre	\$54.10	10	\$541.04
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Scenario: #7 - Cover Crop Adaptive Mgt

Scenario Description: The practice scenario is for the implementation of cover crops in small replicated plots to allow the producer to learn how to manage cover crops on their operation. Scenario includes implementing replicated strip trials on a field plot to evaluate, identify and implement a particular cover crop management strategy (e.g., cover crop vs no cover crop, multiple species vs, single specie, evaluate different termination methods or timings, using a legume vs no legume for nitrogen credits). This will be done following the interim guidance for cover crop adaptive management to be issued to all field offices.

Before Situation: Row crops such as corn, soybeans, or cotton are grown and harvested in mid-late fall. Fields are disked immediately following harvest, with rows in some fields being hipped for drainage. Residue amounts after harvest average 30% or less, resulting in bare soil being exposed to wind erosion and/or intense rainfall during the fall, winter, and early spring. Over the winter residue degrades and sediment/nutrient runoff from fields increases. Sheet and rill erosion occurs with visible rills by spring. Runoff from the fields flows into streams, water courses or other water bodies causing degradation to the receiving waters. Soil health (soil organic matter) declines over time as a result of tillage practices, low residue crops, and long periods of bare soil. The producer is considering the use of cover crops but is unsure how to manage on their unique operation or is seeking a way to better manage cover crops in the operation.

After Situation: Installation of this scenario will result in establishment of a cover crop replicated plots to compare to different management strategies for cover crop management following the guidance in the Agronomy Technical Note 11 - Adaptive Management and the Interim Guidance for Cover Crop Adaptive Management to be issued to all field offices for FY15. Implementation involves establishing the replicated plots to evaluate one or more cover crop management strategies. The plot will consist of at least 4 replicated plots designed, laid out, managed and evaluated with the assistance of a consultant knowledgeable in cover crop management. Results are used to make cover crop management decisions to address erosion and water quality issues. Yields will be measured and statistically summarized following the procedures in Agronomy Technical Note 11 - Adaptive Management. The yields for each plot will be adjusted to the appropriate moisture content. This would be repeated for 3 years.

Scenario Feature Measure: Area planted

Scenario Unit: Acre

Scenario Typical Size: 10

Total Scenario Cost: \$4,579.51

Scenario Cost/Unit: \$457.95

Cost Details

Component Name	Id	Description	Unit	Cost	Qty	Total
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Labor

General Labor	231	Labor performed using basic tools such as power tool, shovels, and other tools that do not require extensive training. Ex. pipe layer, herder, concrete placement, materials spreader, flagger, etc.	Hour	\$20.07	30	\$602.09
Specialist Labor	235	Labor requiring a specialized skill set: Includes Agronomists, Foresters, Biologists, etc. to provide additional technical information during the planning and implementation of the practice. Does not include NRCS or TSP services.	Hour	\$100.14	30	\$3,004.29

Materials

Herbicide, Glyphosate	334	A broad-spectrum, non-selective systemic herbicide. Refer to WIN-PST for product names and active ingredients. Includes materials and shipping only.	Acre	\$15.93	10	\$159.26
Two Species Mix, Cool Season Annual (1 grass and 1 legume)	2314	Cool season annual grass and legume mix. Includes material and shipping only.	Acre	\$54.10	10	\$541.04

Equipment Installation

Chemical, ground application	948	Chemical application performed by ground equipment. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$6.09	10	\$60.88
Seeding Operation, No Till/Grass Drill	960	No Till drill or grass drill for seeding. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$21.19	10	\$211.94