



Soil Quality Enhancement Activity – SQL02 – Continuous cover crops

State Criteria

For this enhancement cover crops must be grown on all planned acres following annually planted crops and during any fallow periods in the crop rotation. In addition, the cover crops grown must meet at least two of the following criteria:

1. High bio-mass cover crops for erosion control and increasing soil organic matter.

Acceptable cover crops for this option include:

Barley; Canola; Corn; Pearl millet; Oats; Cereal Rye; Annual or Italian Ryegrass; Any Sorghum; Sudangrass or Sudan/Sorghum hybrids; Triticale; and Wheat.

2. Legume cover crops for biological nitrogen fixation.

Acceptable cover crops for this option include:

Alfalfa; Chickling vetch; Chickpea; Cowpea; Field pea/lentils; Hairy or crown vetch; White clover; Red clover; Soybean; and Sweet clover.

3. Non-leguminous cover crops to capture and recycle residual nitrogen.

Acceptable cover crops for this option include:

Buckwheat; Canola; Corn; Radish; Cereal rye; Annual or Italian ryegrass; Safflower; Any Sorghum; Sudangrass or Sudan/Sorghum hybrids; Sunflower; Triticale; Turnip; and Wheat.

This enhancement does not apply to the same acres on which a leguminous cover crop is applied.

4. Cover crops for weed suppression.

Acceptable cover crops for this option include:

Barley; Buckwheat; Cowpea; White clover; Pearl millet; Mustard; Radish; Red clover; Cereal rye; Annual or Italian ryegrass; Any Sorghum; Sudangrass or Sudan/Sorghum hybrids; Triticale; Turnip; and Wheat.

5. Biodiversity improvement with cover crops. Cover crop selected must be a different crop type (i.e. warm season grass, cool season grass, warm season broadleaf, cool season broadleaf) or, if a cover crop mix is used, include a different crop type than the previous crop.

Acceptable cover crops for this option include:

Alfalfa; Barley; Buckwheat; Canola; Chickling vetch; Chickpea; Cowpea; Field pea/lentils; Hairy or Crown vetch; White clover; Mustard; Radish; Red clover; Cereal rye; Annual or Italian ryegrass; Any Sorghum; Sudangrass or Sudan/Sorghum hybrids; Sweet clover; Triticale; and Wheat.

Additional Requirements

- Cover crops can not be harvested or grazed
- Cover crops must follow planting dates, seeding rates, method of planting and other requirements in 340 Cover Crop Standard. Specifications will be provided on the [Cover Crop Worksheet \(NE-CPA-7\)](#).
- Cover crops which winter kill must be planted at least 8 weeks prior to the average date of the first killing frost.
- Cover crops which over winter must have at least 4 weeks of spring growth before termination.
- Winter annual cover crops planted following a low residue crop must have a minimum of 6-8" of growth before they are terminated.
- Cover crops which follow fall harvested crops must be a winter annual small grain such as rye, wheat or triticale, or a winter annual small grain with a legume.

