



Soil Quality Enhancement Activity – SQL04 – Use of cover crop mixes

State Criteria (same as NATIONAL CRITERIA)

Cover crops must be planted whenever the crop they are scheduled to follow in the rotation is grown and rotated across all planned acres by the end of the contract period.

Example: The existing rotation is corn – beans – wheat; for this enhancement a cover crop mix will be planted following wheat – to meet the criteria of the enhancement the cover crop mix must be planted following wheat whenever it is grown and rotated across all planned acres by the end of the contract period.

Cover Crop Requirements

- Cover crop mixes must include a different crop type (i.e. warm season grass, cool season grass, warm season broadleaf, cool season broadleaf) than the previous crop.
- Cover crops cannot be mechanically harvested. Grazing is allowed after plant establishment.
- Cover crops must follow planting dates, seeding rates, method of planting and other requirements in Conservation Practice Standard [340, Cover Crop](#). 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 include a winter annual small grain such as rye, wheat or triticale.

For a list of potential cover crop species refer to Table 1 associated with the [Cover Crop Worksheet \(NE-CPA-7\)](#) or in the Cover Crop Standard (340) in the Field Office Technical Guide.

Species selection should reflect the producer’s objectives as identified on the [Cover Crop Worksheet \(NE-CPA-7\)](#).

For mixes of more than 2 species, consider adding 0.5 to 1.0 lb/ac of a brassica: canola, mustard, radish or turnip.

Consider including a leguminous cover crop species if the crop to follow is non-leguminous.



United States Department of Agriculture
 Natural Resources Conservation Service

NE-SQL04 2014 Ranking Period 1

Documentation Requirements (SEE NATIONAL ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY JOBSHEET)

Complete the Table below:

To be completed by NRCS and Producer during planning				To be completed by Producer during certification		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tract(s)	Field(s)	Acres Planned	Existing Rotation	Cover Crop Mix	Planned Rotation	Acres Applied
Ex. T1001	1	100	C-B	Rye & Field Peas	C-B- cc	100

EX= EXAMPLE, COLUMNS 1-4 NRCS COMPLETES, COLUMNS 5-7 PRODUCER COMPLETES
C=Corn; B=soybeans/edible beans; W=Wheat; M=Milo; A=Alfalfa; O=Oats; cc=cover crop;
Others=_____

In addition:

Complete, sign, and attach [Cover Crop worksheet NE-CPA-7](#) showing the cover crops grown, seeding date, seeding rate, fertilizer applied, and the method and date of termination.

I certify that the enhancement criteria have been met and the required documentation provided to NRCS.

Certified by: _____ **Date:** _____