



Soil Quality Enhancement Activity – SQL12 – Intensive cover cropping in annual crops

State Criteria (same as NATIONAL CRITERIA)

For this enhancement cover crops must be grown during all the non-crop production periods in an annual crop rotation including 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. Requires a cover crop mix with a minimum of three species total selected from at least two of the functional groups (i.e. warm season grass, cool season grass, warm season broadleaf, cool season broadleaf). If the cover crop will be used to attract pollinators or beneficial insects include a minimum of two flowering species which collectively comprise at least one-fourth (25%) of the total seeded mix on a seeds per square foot basis. (For more information, refer to job sheets Enhancement PLT15 Establish pollinator and/or beneficial insect habitat.)

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.

Cover Crop Requirements

- Cover crops cannot be harvested or grazed
- 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 be a winter annual small grain such as rye, wheat or triticale, or a winter annual small grain with a legume.

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	Field(s)	Existing Rotation	Planned Rotation	Acres Planned	Cover Crop Used	Acres Applied
Ex. T1001	1	C-B-W	C-cc1-B-W-cc2	80	cc1 = wheat or rye cc2 = cowpeas	80

EX= EXAMPLE, COLUMNS 1-5 NRCS COMPLETES, COLUMNS 6-7 PRODUCER COMPLETES
C=Corn; B=soybeans/edible beans; W=Wheat; M=Milo; A=Alfalfa; O=Oats; cc=cover crop;
Others=_____

In addition:

1. Provide a map showing the location of the fields where the practices were applied.
2. 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:** _____