



September 23, 2015

TECHNICAL GUIDE NOTICE NUMBER 215

Purpose. This notice transmits the revised Conservation Practice Standard (340) Cover Crops and supporting documents for release to Section IV of the Pennsylvania NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

Effective Date. This notice is effective upon receipt.

Explanation of Changes. Changes specific to the Pennsylvania conservation practice standard Cover Crop (340) and supporting documents are described below. Supporting guidance includes the Conservation Practice (340) Cover Crop Overview (NEW!), Practice Guide and Appendix (NEW!), Implementation Requirements / Job Check Out, and new references.

Conservation Practice Standard The major change to the practice includes a consolidation of eight purposes of the practice into six. Promoting biological nitrogen fixation is now a consideration of the client's management objectives. Increasing biodiversity is now addressed by the general criteria applicable to all purposes of requiring selection of species and planting dates that will not compete with production crop yield and harvest. The purposes are also clarified to better communicate benefits for soil health and water quality.

Practice Overview (NEW!) This new fact sheet was developed to describe natural resource improvements expected from applying cover crops for one or more of purposes.

Practice Guide (NEW!) This new guidance document was developed replacing guidance previously found in a reference titled Table 1 Recommended Cover Crops, which is now updated and appended to the new guide. The new guide includes instructions for filling out the Implementation Requirements/Job Check Out document. It also contains an extensive list of references containing cover crop characteristics, procedures for developing cover crop mixes, terminating cover crops, interseeding, organic crop considerations and more.

Implementation Requirements\Job Check Out The national template for communicating implementation requirements to the farmer was modified to include a statement to certify when the practice is complete.

References For convenience, commonly used references are included in the practice folder in Section IV of the FOTG. New ones added include USDA ARS Cover Crop Chart V2.0, Agronomy Technical Note 10 Adaptive Management for Conservation Practices and Implementing Adaptive Management Guide Sheet for Cover Crop (340), Penn State Extension Fact Sheet Improving the Success of Interseeding Cover Crops in Corn, and a copy of the eXtension article Making the Most of Mixtures.

Remove and archive, as appropriate, the following existing documents under the 340 practice code: the Check Out Document, Job Sheet, Map Zones, Standard, Statement of Work, resource_item 1 Recommended Cover Crops. Maintain and continue to use the Cover Crop (340) in Organic Systems Pennsylvania Implementation Guide and the NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines, Version III September of 2014.

Access Instructions

The entire Pennsylvania Field Office Technical Guide can be accessed at the following website:
<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

You may also access Section IV Table of Contents directly at the following web address:
<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/toc.aspx?CatID=12487>



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