Natural Resources Conservation Service

WASHINGTON

WQL19 – Transition to organic grazing systems

CSP Enhancement Washington State Supplement

Land Use Applicability: Pastureland, Rangeland, Forestland

January 2014

Client/Operating Unit:		Tract Number:	
Farm/Ranch Location:		Farm Number:	
Specifications Date:		Field Number(s):	
Planned Installation Date:		Proposed Treatment Acres:	

Enhancement Description:

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"Transition to Organic Grazing Systems" supports the conversion of a conventional to an organic livestock grazing system. Key to the enhancement activity is following ecological and pasture-based grazing requirements, applying materials according to the National List of Allowed Synthetic and Prohibited Natural Substances, and managing livestock according to National Organic Program (NOP) rules (Subpart C – Organic Production and Handling Requirements) for organic certification. This enhancement activity facilitates compliance with NOP rules for organic certification.

Benefits

Environmental benefits will be operation specific. Benefits may include, but are not limited to improved forage, soil, and animal health, and improved water quality.

Managing for recommended time and timing of grazing, minimum and maximum grazing heights, pasture/paddock rotation, and rest periods improve plant health, diversity, and productivity. Sufficient pasture/paddock rest or pasture/paddock avoidance that minimizes livestock contact with viable internal parasite populations can break parasite cycles, reduce ingestion of parasites and the need for treatment, and improve animal health. Soil organisms and soil quality are benefitted by the reduction or elimination of natural or synthetic pesticides typically used on forage and/or livestock. Rotating livestock through several pastures/paddocks minimizes the development of loafing areas and improves the distribution of manure nutrients for plant uptake. Nutrients are more uniformly available to forage crops and the potential for polluted runoff from high traffic areas is reduced.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement applies to only pasture, range or forest land use acres in the process of transitioning to an organic production system.

Criteria for transition to organic grazing systems

1. Manage pasture grazing and rest periods to follow NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice standard (528) criteria for recommended maximum (begin) and minimum (end) grazing heights by forage species or Ecological Site Description interpretations. Beginning and ending grazing heights are followed to maximize forage quality and palatability and to promote rapid recovery and forage regrowth.

   a. Maintain a livestock watering system that accommodates a high frequency of livestock rotation through several different pastures or paddocks during the grazing season. Follow NRCS practice standard criteria for Prescribed Grazing (528), Watering Facility (614), Pipeline (516), or other related standards for appropriate supply and travel distance to water.

b. Use fencing that is permanent, semi-permanent, and/or temporary to facilitate pasture rotation and for the protection of water and other resources from contamination or degradation. Follow the NRCS Fence practice standard (382). Additionally, follow NOP rules for allowable fence materials.

Note: Contact your local conservationist for assistance with Conservation Practice Standards.

2. Apply all materials, including plant nutrients and pesticides for forage production and animal health, in accordance with the National List of Allowed Synthetic and Prohibited Natural Substances.

3. Comply with all NOP rules for livestock management (NOP § 205.236 - .239 for livestock origin, feed, healthcare, living conditions)

4. Complete organic transition within three (3) years as verified by obtaining an approved Organic System Plan from a valid certifying agency.

5. Follow a written grazing plan that meets the CSP eligibility requirements.

Layout Sketch & Drawing (Provide sketch, drawings, maps, and/or aerial photographs.)

- Geo-referenced field map with all delineated treatment areas where CSP Enhancement WQL19 is to be applied.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when the land use acre is certified via an Organic System Plan.

Documentation Requirements

1. Provide a written grazing plan following the 'Plans and Specifications' guidelines in the Prescribed Grazing standard. Include time and timing of grazing, minimum and maximum grazing heights, and date rotated in and date off of pastures/paddocks in the grazing plan, as appropriate for the land use.

2. Provide a record of the application of inputs according to the NOP rules, e.g., type, date, rate, and amount of allowed nutrients and pesticides for forage and livestock.

3. Provide a copy of the Organic System Plan when approved by the certifying agent.

NRCS Pasture Notes, grazer's notebook, or other record keeping systems for pasture livestock operations can be used to facilitate record-keeping.

References*:

Murphy, Bill. 1995. Pasture Management to Sustain Agriculture. Agroecology: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture, 2nd ed, edited by Miguel A. Altieri. Westview Press. Boulder, CO. pp. 321-347.

Bezdicek, David. 1984. Organic Farming: Current Technology and Its Role in a Sustainable Agriculture. ASA Special Publication No. 46. ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, Madison, WI. 192 P.

USDA-AMS. 2012. National Organic Program Final Rule – Access to Pasture

www.ams.usda.gov/NOP

Field Office Technical Guide:

eFOTG, http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/

*** Some online documents may take several minutes to download.**

State Supplemental Information

States should be familiar with National Organic Program (NOP) requirements.

National Organic Program

Specifications for Conservation Practices that are included in a conservation plan are designed and implemented in such a way as to conform to National Organic Program (NOP) criteria. The desire to transition to Organic is a planning objective for the conservation plan. Conservation practice alternatives are presented to the client and the client selects which practices will be used to address identified resource concerns and client objectives. The Organic system plan is submitted to a certifying agency for certification by the client.

An approved organic system plan includes specific resource concerns that must be addressed. These are Soil and Water Quality. Individual conservation practice specifications are designed and implemented to meet resource concern and conservation practice criteria as well as NOP plan criteria.

For Specific Information on the National Organic Program Rules for organic certification, refer to:

http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr;sid=c4c9b5f8b4b90547eac919968c3e049b;rgn=div5;view=text;node=7%3A3.1.1.9.32;idno=7;cc=ecfr

(Subpart C – Organic Production and Handling Requirements)

For specific information on the National List of Allowed Synthetic and Prohibited Natural Substances, refer to:

http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateJ&leftNav=NationalOrganicProgram&page=NOPNationalList&description=National%20List%20of%20Allowed%20and%20Prohibited%20Substances&acct=nopgeninfo

For specific information on the National Organic Program Home Page, refer to:

http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/nop

Washington State Website for Organic Food and Production:

http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/

Common Conservation Practices which may be used in a Resource Management System for clients transitioning to organic grazing systems include:

Prescribed Grazing 528
Integrated Pest Management 595 (no chemicals)
Brush Management 314 (no chemicals)
Herbaceous Weed Control 315 (no chemicals)
Fence 382 (non-treated wood)
Spring Development 574
Watering Facility 614
Pipeline 516

Documentation Form

Producer: _____ **Date:** _____

Tracts: _____ **County:** _____

1. Provide a written grazing plan following the 'Plans and Specifications' guidelines in the Prescribed Grazing standard. Include time and timing of grazing, minimum and maximum grazing heights, and date rotated in and date off of pastures/paddocks in the grazing plan, as appropriate for the land use.

2. Provide a record of the application of inputs according to the NOP rules, e.g., type, date, rate, and amount of allowed nutrients and pesticides for forage and livestock.

Nutrients Allowed for Organic Grazing				
Herd Identification	Nutrient Type	Application Date	Application Rate	Nutrient Amount

Pesticides Allowed for Organic Grazing				
Herd Identification	Pesticide Type	Application Date	Application Rate	Pesticide Amount

3. Provide a copy of the Organic System Plan when approved by the certifying agent.

NRCS Pasture Notes, grazer's notebook, or other record keeping systems for pasture livestock operations can be used to facilitate record-keeping.

Client's Acknowledgement (To be signed before the Enhancement is applied.)

By signing below, I acknowledge that I:

- **have reviewed and understand the site specific design, installation specifications and operation/maintenance requirements in this State Supplemental Sheet and have an understanding of the purpose(s) of this Enhancement;**
- **will install, operate, and maintain this Enhancement in accordance with the National Sheet, the Washington State Supplemental Sheet and the site specific specifications.**
- **will make no changes to the planned design and installation without prior written approval of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.**
- **will obtain all necessary permits and/or rights, and comply with all ordinances and laws pertaining to the installation, operation, and maintenance of this Enhancement, prior to the start of installation; and**
- **will assume responsibility for notifying all Utilities affected by the installation, operation and maintenance of this Enhancement.**

Signature	**Date**

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