United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Conservation Crop Rotation
Wisconsin Job Sheet 328

Landowner: _____ Tract: _____
Date:_____

Definition
Growing crops in a recurring sequence on the same field.

Purpose
This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to support one or more of the following:

- Reduce sheet and rill or wind erosion.
- Maintain or improve soil organic matter content.
- Manage the balance of plant nutrients.
- Manage plant pests (weeds, insects, and diseases).
- Provide food for domestic livestock.
- Provide food and cover for wildlife.
- Supply nitrogen through biological nitrogen fixation to reduce energy use.
- Conserve water.
- Provide annual crops for bioenergy feedstocks.
- Provide food and cover for wildlife, including pollinator forage, cover, and nesting.

Conditions Where Practice Applies
This practice applies to all land where crops are grown, in a regularly reoccurring cropping sequence.

Considerations
Where excess plant nutrients or soil contaminants are a concern, utilizing deep-rooted crops or cover crops in the rotation can help recover or remove the nutrient or contaminant from the soil profile. Whole plant harvest as forage will further enhance nutrient uptake.

Soil compaction can be reduced by adjusting crop rotations to include deep rooted crops that are able to extend to and penetrate the compacted soil layers, as well as avoiding crops that require field operations when the soils are wet.

Consider selecting crops that are tolerant to abrasion from wind blown soil or tolerant to high wind velocity.

Consider reducing or eliminating tillage from a management system to increase soil organic matter quicker than rotations with several years of perennial vegetation.

Consider crop management strategies to match nitrogen release from residues of nitrogen fixing crop with nitrogen uptake by subsequent crop, taking into account climate, soil physical and chemical properties, C:N ratio of residues of the nitrogen fixing crops, and timing of nitrogen demand by the subsequent crop.

Consider retaining bolting or flowering crops after harvest to provide beneficial insects with an important food source when and where pests are active.

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Plans and Specifications

Plan documentation shall include:

- conservation plan includes: maps, crops to be grown, sequence of crops and length of crop rotation,
- location of planned crop sequence by field or group of fields, identified on map.
- list of forage species established as “hay” in the rotation, and documentation of rotation to address specific resource concerns such as balance of plant nutrients or to enhance soil organic matter content.
- soil loss estimates, soil conditioning index and soil tillage intensity rating computations and analysis utilizing RUSLE2 output data.

Operation and Maintenance

Rotations shall provide for acceptable substitute crops in case of crop failure or shift in planting intentions for weather-related or economic reasons. Acceptable substitutes are crops having similar properties that meet the criteria for all the resource concerns identified for the field or treatment unit.

References

NRCS Wisconsin Conservation Practice Standard 328, Conservation Crop Rotation

UWEX Publication A1525, Forage Variety Update

UWEX Publication A3397, Small Grain Varieties for Grain and Forage in Wisconsin

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Certification Requirements For Practice Standard 328 Conservation Crop Rotation:

__Practice objective is identified in conservation plan.

__Conservation plan and plan map verify the location of cropping sequence (s) by field and or groups of fields and records provide current crop position in rotation and length of time each crop will be planted in the rotation.

__Documentation verify the crop rotation (s) selected, addressed the identified resource concern.

__Documentation include criteria-related computations, utilizing RUSLE2, WEPS or other evaluation tools to determine, acceptable cropping sequence (s), (when applicable);_____.

__To meet the practice objective, were facilitating practices required according to design documents;__Yes __NO. If yes, review designs to verify supporting practice (s) were applied in accordance to standard criteria, plans and specifications;_____.

Was the conservation plan modified?____Yes___No. If yes, documentation include revised computations utilizing RUSLE 2, WEPS or other evaluation tools, (when applicable) and file data, support approved crop substitutions that have similar crop properties for addressing the identified resource, at a minimum equal to the initial planned crop;_____.

Acres planned:_____Acres applied:_____

Field Inspection Date:_____

Comments:_____

_____

I certify that the requirements of practice standard 328, Conservation Crop Rotation has been completed according to criteria and specifications in this standard and meet the requirements specified in this Job Sheet.

Certified by:_____Date:_____

TSP or Certified Conservation Planner

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Wisconsin Practice Standard 328 Conservation Crop Rotation—Checklist

__Practice objective is identified in conservation plan.

__Conservation plan and plan map verify the location of cropping sequence (s) by field and or groups of fields and records provide current crop position in rotation and length of time each crop will be planted in the rotation.

__Documentation verify the crop rotation (s) selected, addressed the identified resource concern.

__Documentation include criteria-related computations, utilizing RUSLE2, WEPS or other evaluation tools to determine, acceptable cropping sequence (s), (when applicable);_____.

__To meet the practice objective, were facilitating practices required according to design documents;__Yes __NO. If yes, review designs to verify supporting practice (s) were applied in accordance to standard criteria, plans and specifications;_____.

Was the conservation plan modified?____Yes___No. If yes, documentation include revised computations utilizing RUSLE 2, WEPS or other evaluation tools, (when applicable) and file data, support approved crop substitutions that have similar crop properties for addressing the identified resource, at a minimum equal to the initial planned crop;_____.

Acres planned:_____Acres applied:_____

Field Inspection Date:_____

Comments:_____

_____

I certify that the requirements of practice standard 328, Conservation Crop Rotation has been completed according to criteria and specifications in this standard and meet the requirements specified in this Job Sheet.

Certified by:_____**Date:**_____

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