

Water Quantity Enhancement Activity – WQT06 - Conversion to Non-Irrigated Crop Production



Enhancement Description

This enhancement consists of the conversion of land that has been irrigated 2 out of the last 5 years to crops or pasture production that does not require irrigation.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland and pastureland.

Benefits

The conversion of irrigated cropland or pasture to non-irrigated (dry) cropland, non-irrigated

pasture or range land, in areas where ground water or surface water supplies are limited, has the immediate benefit of conserving a scarce resource. Where irrigation water is pumped, elimination of pumping will also reduce energy usage and improve air quality if internal combustion engines were used for pumping on the farm.

Criteria

1. Land eligible for this enhancement must have irrigation water available and have been under irrigation for 2 of the last 5 years.
2. The water that would have been used for irrigating land where this enhancement is implemented cannot be used to irrigate other acreage on the farm or the water rights sold to another landowner.
3. The land must be converted to growing crops, pasture species or other vegetation that can be expected to survive under the normally expected rainfall regime.
4. Regardless of the type of vegetation grown on the land after removal of irrigation, invasive species must be managed.
5. The conversion should include the necessary changes in management of the land to improve the success of the change, such as, changes to drought tolerant crops, changed crop rotations and installation of moisture capturing practices.

Documentation Requirements

1. A map showing areas to be converted to non-irrigated land.
2. Documentation of the amount of water used for irrigation in the previous 5 years.

Michigan Supplement

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When irrigated cropland is converted to meet the criteria for Conversion to Non-Irrigated Crop Production to non-irrigated pasture the following grass species are recommended for pasture on the non-irrigated acres and are the *most drought tolerant* species available for this purpose.

Hay or Pasture Grass Species - Highly Tolerant of Drought or Extremes¹

Grasses	Management
Indian Grass	
Little Bluestem*	Eroded slopes.
Reed Canarygrass* (improved)	Pastures on overflow creek bottom land, gullies, sod waterways, mix with alfalfa or Sweetclover.
Smooth Bromegrass	Alfalfa grass mixtures best improves pastures and meadow.
Switchgrass* ²	Leafy fine stemmed; rust resistant for seeding in grass mixtures on sandy and poorly drained land.
Tall Fescue* (improved)	Use with grass legume mixtures per NRCS Michigan (MI) conservation practice standard, Pasture and Hayland Planting (512).

*native species

¹ Seeding rates, dates, and seed mixture recommendations by species are found in conservation practice standard NRCS MI 512.

² Switchgrass should not be selected for hay or pasture when the intended forage use is for horses or sheep.

