

Indiana Fact Sheet EQIP- Energy Conservation and Soil Quality Improvement System

329 – No-Till/Strip-Till- Energy Conservation and Soil Quality Improvement System

DESCRIPTION - This system combines four components: Cover Crops (340); Residue and Tillage Management -No-Till/Strip-Till (329); Nutrient Management (590); and Conservation Buffers (which include any or all of 393-Filter Strip, 386-Field Border, 332-Contour Buffer Strip, 390-Riparian Herbaceous Cover, 391-Riparian Forest Buffer, 422-Hedgerow Planting, 380-Windbreak/ Shelterbelt Establishment, 412-Grassed Waterway; or 327- Conservation Cover and/or 342- Critical Area Planting when installed within a field). The combination of these practices, implemented as a system, capture and sequester carbon and other nutrients while reducing the fuel and nitrogen consumption in a row crop production system.

- Energy consumption is reduced by utilization of the efficiency tools and components of nutrient management and reduction of tillage passes as the no-till/strip-till system is implemented.
- Soil quality is improved when the combination of practices work in conjunction to improve soil structure, provide additional soil organic matter, increase biological activity, enhance nutrient cycling and reduce erosion.
- Conservation buffers require no tillage or nitrogen and are strategically placed in areas along water bodies, fence rows, woodland and erosive areas and provide increased carbon sequestration while reducing input costs on traditionally low producing or sensitive acres, and provide wildlife habitat.



Practice Requirements

Acres enrolled in this practice must have all four component practices installed and maintained according to the respective NRCS Indiana eFOTG Standards. Consider phasing the four components in over a 2 year period. Establishing cover crops and nutrient management prior to starting a no-till system may have significant advantages to the overall system.

- Buffers must be the minimum width required by NRCS Indiana standards and be adjacent to all water bodies adjacent to the offered acres. Water Bodies are defined as permanent lakes and ponds, sinkholes that hold water to the extent that cropping is prevented, permanent streams, and/or seasonal streams that have a defined stream channel and contain water more than just immediately before or after rainfall or snow melt. Additional Buffers should be positioned where they address the most critical resource concerns. **The minimum buffer acreage must be at least 2% of the contracted cropland.**

Practice Eligibility and Payment

A participant may enroll up to **1000 acres** which lacks one or more of the component practices. The producer agrees to implement the needed practice(s) which completes the **Energy Conservation and Soil Quality Improvement system**, to receive an incentive payment of **\$20 per acre per year for up to three years**. Any practice which is needed to complete the system is also eligible for compensation separately under EQIP guidelines for that practice.

- Buffer acres enrolled under CRP, GRP, &/or WRP can be used to meet eligibility, but cannot be included in the EQIP contract for payment.
- Any land currently enrolled in CSP is not eligible to receive Energy Conservation and Soil Quality Improvement Systems incentives through EQIP.

Performance Requirements

Required Documentation =

1. The EQIP Participant will be required to provide output results from the online Energy Estimators for Tillage and Nitrogen <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/energy/index.html> as well as COMET-VR (<http://www.cometvr.colostate.edu/>) for both their current and new systems in the first year the practice is scheduled.

The Participant will retain annual records that support that the system has been applied to the contracted acres.

Payment will be made each year when the final practice of the bundle is verified as installed on the cropland acres under contract for this practice; the first payment will also require printed outputs from the Energy Estimators and COMET-VR.

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