



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Water Quality Enhancement Activity – WQL15 – Cover Crop Following Fall Manure Applications



Cover Crop Following Fall Manure Application

This enhancement is for the use of a winter cover crop following fall manure applications.

Land Use Applicability

This enhancement is applicable to cropland.

Benefits

A winter cover crop following fall manure applications will improve water quality and soil quality by reducing runoff and erosion and increasing soil organic matter.

Increased soil organic matter will sequester carbon,

reduce compaction, improve tilth, increase soil water holding capacity and improve nutrient cycling. Winter cover crops will protect ground and surface waters by reducing the leaching of nitrogen, preventing erosion that transports phosphorus, and by sequestering the nutrients in plant materials for later use by the spring crop.

Criteria

- Manure will be applied in the fall in accordance with a nutrient management plan to properly utilize manure or organic by-products as a plant nutrient source.
- The cover crop will be planted within 15 days of the manure application.

Documentation Requirements

For each year that this enhancement is implemented, provide the following documentation.

- A nutrient management plan accounting for the nutrients supplied by the manure application.
- Documentation of the amount and timing of the fall manure application.
- Documentation of the cover crop planted, the seeding rates, the establishment procedure, the planting date and the date the crop cover is destroyed.
- A map showing fields where this enhancement is applied.
- Photo documentation showing typical fields where the enhancement is applied.