

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

June 18, 2013

IOWA INSTRUCTION 180-387 – PREVENTED PLANTING SUMMER COVER
OPTIONS FOR PRODUCERS ON FIELDS LABELED
HIGHLY ERODIBLE (HEL)

IA387.0 PURPOSE

This Iowa Instruction provides direction on options that may be discussed with producers with fields that are classified as Highly-erodible (HEL) that experience prevented planting due to wet conditions.

IA387.1 SCOPE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) seeks to work with producers that are experiencing prevented planting and protect soils from erosion and sedimentation damages. This instruction provides direction to NRCS employees in situations where they are advising producers with HEL fields in years when crop planting is prevented due to wet conditions.

IA387.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed under the Topics/People/NRCS Employees/Iowa NRCS eDirectives or at this link [Iowa NRCS eDirectives website](#).

IA387.3 EXHIBITS

See the attachment.

/s/

Jay T. Mar
State Conservationist

Attachments

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(IA Instruction 180-387 First Edition – June 2013)

Helping People Help the Land

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Approved By: /s/

Date: June 18, 2013

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Introduction

Crop producers with HEL fields face dual challenges during years when planting is prevented due to wet field conditions. Those that have purchased federally-subsidized crop insurance must ensure conformance with the provisions of their insurance policies. At the same time they are responsible for HEL Compliance.

This instruction provides direction for NRCS field employees that are assisting producers under these circumstances. These instructions deal with conservation measures. Questions regarding crop insurance must be referred to the individual producer's crop insurance agent.

Conservation Cover Options for HEL Land with Soybean or Disturbed (Harvested or Tilled) Corn Residue

1. A summer cover crop is strongly recommended to protect the soil and maintain conformance with the producer's HEL Compliance responsibilities. The summer cover crop may be one or more of the species listed in the "Cover Crops to Improve Soil in Prevented Planting Fields" Fact Sheet dated June 2013 (attached) or successive versions. Winter cereal grasses may also be used.
2. A fall/winter cover crop is also strongly recommended and may be necessary to ensure compliance with HEL requirements for the following spring. Options for fall/winter cover crops include:
 - a. Volunteer re-seeding of the summer cover crop that is left standing.
 - b. Standing tall winter cereal grass residue that is left un-harvested and un-grazed.
 - c. Re-seeding of a fall/winter cover crop by September 15 using:
 - i. One or more of the species listed in the "Cover Crops to Improve Soil in Prevented Planting Fields" Fact Sheet dated June 2013 or successive versions, or
 - ii. A species or mix selected using the Midwest Cover Crops Council – Cover Crop Decision Tool found at <http://mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/VertIndex.php>.

NOTE: This option is required if the producer is receiving payment for cover crop establishment under any federal or state program.

Cover Crop Options for HEL Land with Un-disturbed (Not Harvested, Shredded, Rolled or Tilled) Corn Residues

If corn residue has not been disturbed by harvesting, shredding, rolling or tillage, any of the options listed above are acceptable. In addition, the producer could:

1. Control noxious weeds during the summer with mowing or herbicide application as needed, then
2. Plant a fall cover crop during the time period of August 1 through September 15 using:
3. Plant:
 - a. One or more of the species listed in the "Cover Crops to Improve Soil in Prevented Planting Fields" Fact Sheet dated June 2013 or successive versions, or
 - b. A species or mix selected using the Midwest Cover Crops Council – Cover Crop Decision Tool found at <http://mcccdev.anr.msu.edu/VertIndex.php>.

NOTE: This option is required if the producer is receiving payment for cover crop establishment under any federal or state program.

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HEL Compliance Status Reviews

If land that has been selected for an HEL status review has been certified as Prevented Planting with the Farm Service Agency, the fields will be given an HEL Compliance Determination code of Not Completed (NC) since the fields did not have a commodity crop planted on them that year. An NC code requires an explanation. From the drop down options choose, “No agricultural commodity crops being grown on HEL.” In the Comments box, type a note that “planting of commodity crops was prevented due to unusual rainfall events.”

As stated above, NRCS employees will strongly recommend cover crops to protect HEL Prevented Planting acres. If a producer chooses to plant cover crops as recommended above, visit the field to observe the cover crop establishment and document it in the producer’s case file.

In some cases a producer could apply one of the Cover Crop options above and still have less ground cover than planned. If that is the only compliance deficiency HEL status review procedures will be adjusted for the year following the Prevented Planting.

1. If the compliance plan calls for no-till and the producer no-tilled into the cover crop after natural termination or terminating the cover crop chemically, use the status review code of AA (actively applying an approved system).
2. If the compliance plan allows tillage and the residue level found during the compliance review is within 20% of the planned amount and there is at least 20% of the ground covered by residue, use the status review code of AA (actively applying an approved system).