



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

MISSISSIPPI



August 2021

CONSERVATION BYTES



Kurt Readus, State Conservationist

A Message From The State Conservationist

As we enter into August, I hope everyone has had the opportunity to enjoy the growing season here in Mississippi! It has been a rainy season but I hope everyone saw a plentiful harvest, no matter how big or small, that they can be proud of.

I also want to thank everyone across the state for their responsible stewardship! Your work, and dedication provides us the best agricultural community in America, and for that, I say thank you! As always, continue to stay safe and enjoy the rest of these summer months.

As we have seen, COVID-19 numbers have been going up in our state. So going forward, our employees, on-site contractors, partners, volunteers, customers, and visitors in areas of "substantial" or "high" community COVID-19 transmission are required to wear a mask in Federal buildings and government owned or leased vehicles regardless of vaccination status. Managers and employees should utilize the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#) website to determine whether they are located in one of these areas.

ABOUT NRCS

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service collaborates with farmers, ranchers, communities and other landowners to help protect natural resources on private lands. We work side-by-side with landowners to identify and address natural resource concerns, such as the quality of water and soil and the amount of habitat for precious wildlife.

Find your local service center for more on how NRCS can help you.

Kurt Readus, State Conservationist

Feature Story Highlight

Tips on a Successful Growing Season

By Asst. Public Affairs Specialist Aaron Porter & Agronomist Jonathan Vollmer



Cool season cover crop mixes and monocultures.

As we enter a new planting season, NRCS Mississippi formulated a list of tips that agricultural producers, both large and small, can use for a successful cover crop mix and prepare them for the cool-season months.

Use these tips below and enjoy a great harvest!

5 Tips For Choosing a Successful Cover Crop Mix:

1. Combine a minimum of three species with each consisting of a different functional group.
2. Do not include a cover crop species that is already in the crop rotation.
3. Combine species that are the same seasonality (i.e. warm season or cool season).
4. Grazing mixes should include a mixing rate of 25-50% legumes, 25-50% grasses, and at most 25% forbs.
5. For nitrogen production, a cover crop mix rate should include a minimum of 50% legume species with the remaining percentage equally divided between grasses and forbs.

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MISSISSIPPI USDA NRCS LEADERSHIP

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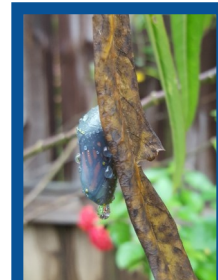
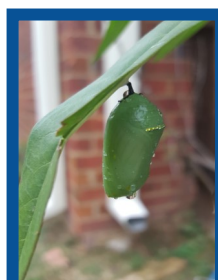
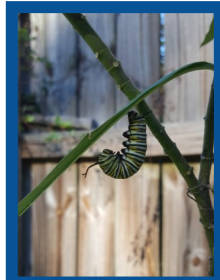
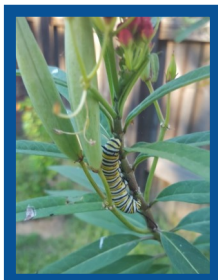
Cool Season Cover Crop Preparation List:

1. The first step in preparing for a cool cover crop should be to use the [Southeast Cover Crop Selection Tool](#) to identify the correct species to address the appropriate resource concerns.
2. After discovering the appropriate species, go to the [Cover Crop Mix, Seed Cost, and Seeding Rate Calculator for the Mid-South](#) and follow the instructions in the technical note. This tool will allow producers and NRCS field staff to estimate seed costs and seeding rates (both broadcasting and drilling) for the recommended species suggested by the selection tool.
3. Determine how and when the cover crop will be planted. This can be done broadcasting (aerial/spreader) or drilling. In either case, it is important to ensure that there is a weed free seed bed with good seed to soil contact.
 - **Tip: Cool season cover crops will usually perform better if planted 6-8 weeks prior to first frost (Sept. 15th to October 15th).**
4. Decide when the cover crop will be terminated. This can be done with herbicide, tillage, roller crimper, and/or mower depending on growth stage at termination.
 - **Tip: Terminating one month prior to planting a cash crop will ensure greater soil cover and other benefits in the spring.**
5. After deciding on how much area that will be planted with cover crops. It is important to submit a seed order to a supplier as soon as possible. The reason being that seed shortages are a common problem when planting cover crops; therefore, giving your order in advance will give ensure seed availability.

To speak to our experts in your respective county for more information, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Mississippi Through Our Eyes

We had the opportunity to start a photo campaign on Twitter “Mississippi Through Our Eyes”, for employees and citizens across the state to participate in! Here are a few photos from the campaign! **Pictured: lifecycle of a butterfly from a Mississippi citizen Gail Smith.**



PMC Calculator Kudos!



We want to send a Conservation Kudos to our very own Jonathan Vollmer with his work on the Cover Crop Mix, Seed Cost, and Seeding Rate Calculator for the Mid-South! To learn more about it, [read here](#).

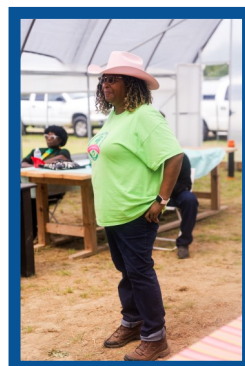
Farmer Shines in Meridian



Mr. Valeriano Suarez of Meridian, Mississippi started his partnership with NRCS back in 2013. Since then he has used a bevy of programs and practices that include Prescribed Burning, Tree Planting, and more! Be on the lookout for his story during Hispanic Heritage Month!

Field Day Event

On July 16th, J'Nay Domineck, CSP Program Manager, presented at a field day event hosted by Cindy Ayers and Foot Print farms, for farmers, landowners, and producers across the state of Mississippi! At the event, Domineck spoke on the various programs offered by NRCS to established and beginning farmers.



FEEDBACK

Conservation Bytes is a newsletter produced by the NRCS Mississippi State Office. Please send us your questions, comments, or ideas to

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