



Conservation Practice Overview

Cover Crop (Code 340)

Grasses, legumes, and other forbs planted for seasonal vegetative cover.

Practice Information

Cover and green manure crops are grown on land where seasonal benefits of a cover crop are needed.

This practice is used to control erosion, add fertility and organic material to the soil, improve soil tilth, increase



infiltration and aeration of the soil, and improve overall soil health. The practice can also be used to increase pollen and nectar resources for bees. Cover and green manure crops have beneficial effects on water quantity and quality. Cover crops have a filtering effect on movement of sediment, pathogens, and dissolved and sediment-attached pollutants.

Operation and maintenance of cover crops include controlling weeds by mowing or by using other pest management techniques, and managing for the efficient use of soil moisture by selecting water-efficient plant species and terminating the cover crop before excessive transpiration. Use of the cover crop as a green manure crop to cycle nutrients will impact when to terminate the cover to match release of nutrient with uptake by following cash crop.

Common Associated Practices

Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Cover Crop (Code 340) is commonly applied with CPSs such as Conservation Crop Rotation (Code 328), Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (Code 329), Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (Code 345), Nutrient Management (Code 590), and Integrated Pest Management (Code 595).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.