USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E340118Z

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients – surface water

Conservation Practice 340: Cover Crop

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed); Crop (Perennial)

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Water Quality Degradation

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description

Establish a cover crop mix to take up excess soil nutrients. Select cover crop species for their ability to effectively utilize nutrients. Terminate the cover crop as late as practical to maximize plant biomass production and nutrient uptake. Cover crop shall not be harvested, grazed, or burned.

Criteria

- Plant species, seedbed preparation, seeding rates, seeding dates, seeding depths, fertility requirements, and planting methods will be consistent with applicable local criteria and soil/site conditions <REFER TO STATE SPECIFIC LISTS>.

- Determine method and timing of cover crop termination to meet grower's objective and current NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines. *Terminate the cover crop as late as practical to maximize plant biomass production and nutrient uptake.*

- Select species that are compatible with other components of the cropping system.

- Ensure herbicides used with crops are compatible with cover crop selections.

- Cover crops may be established between successive production crops, or companion-planted or relay-planted into production crops. Select species and planting dates that will not compete with production crop yield or harvest.

- Do not burn cover crop residue.

- Do not harvest or graze cover crop.

- If specific rhizobium bacteria for selected legumes are not present in the soil, treat seed with appropriate inoculum at time of planting.

- Select cover crop species for their ability to effectively utilize nutrients.

Documentation Requirements

- Cover Crop, 340, Implementation Requirements document must be completed per the Plans and Specifications for the planned purpose.