



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E340106Z3

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Intensive cover cropping (orchard or vineyard floor) to increase soil health and soil organic matter content

Conservation Practice 340: Cover Crop

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Perennial)

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Soil Quality Degradation

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description

Implementation of cover crops to provide orchard or vineyard floor coverage throughout the year. Cover crop shall not be harvested, grazed, or burned. Planned cover crop management activities must achieve a soil conditioning index (SCI) of zero or higher and produce a positive trend in the Organic Matter (OM) subfactor over the life of the crop rotation. The current NRCS wind and water erosion prediction technologies must be used to document SCI calculations.

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 the method and timing of termination to meet the grower's objective and the current NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines.
- Select species that are compatible with other components of the cropping system.
- Ensure herbicides used with crops are compatible with cover crop selections.



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- 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 achieve the purpose of the cover crop without negatively impacting the production crop yield or harvest.
- Do not burn cover crop residue.
- Do not harvest the cover crop.
- If the specific rhizobium bacteria for the selected legume are not present in the soil, treat the seed with the appropriate inoculum at the time of planting.
- Cover crop must provide soil coverage during ALL non-crop production periods in the annual crop rotation.
- *Minimum 2 species cover crop mix* will be selected on the basis of producing higher volumes of organic material and root mass to maintain or increase soil organic matter.
- Planned crop rotation including cover crop biomass production and associated management activities must achieve a management soil conditioning index (SCI) of zero or higher and result in a positive trend in the Organic Matter (OM) subfactor value over the life of the rotation.
- Cover crops, once planted, are replanted annually or maintained year after year.
- Grow cover crops on a minimum of 60% of the field area year annually.

Documentation Requirements

- Cover Crop, 340, Implementation Requirements document must be completed per the Plans and Specifications for the planned purpose.
- The current NRCS wind and water erosion prediction technologies must be used to document SCI calculations.