



**CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**E328106Z3**

**CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

Conservation crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement

**Conservation Practice 328: Conservation crop rotation**

**APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed)**

**RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Soil Quality Degradation**

**ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 Year**

**Enhancement Description**

Implement a crop rotation management system on crop land acres that have recently converted from CRP grass/legume conservation cover to annual planted crops. The crop rotation adds diversity to the system; keeps a living root growing; and is managed to minimize soil chemical, physical and biological disturbance and maintain residue cover on the surface. The rotation includes crops and/or cover crops representing 3 of the 4 crop types during the planned crop sequence: warm season grass (WSG), warm season broadleaf (WSB), cool season grass (CSG), or cool season broadleaf (CSB). The crop rotation will produce a positive trend in the Organic Matter (OM) subfactor value over the life of the rotation, as determined by the SCI. Crop rotation minimizes disturbance and reduces soil erosion from wind to below soil tolerance (T) level. The current NRCS wind and water erosion prediction technologies must be used to document the rotation, STIR and SCI calculations. \*This enhancement is limited to acres where the conversion event took place not more than 2 years prior. Enhancement not applicable on hayland.

**Criteria**

- This enhancement is limited to acres where the conversion of CRP grass/legume conservation cover to annual crops took place not more than 2 years prior to enrollment in CSP. This enhancement is not applicable on hayland.

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- Crops must be grown in a planned sequence as outlined in plan. The crop rotation must include a minimum of four different crops. For purposes of these criteria a cover crop is considered a different crop.
- Where applicable, plan suitable crop substitutions when the planned crop cannot be planted due to weather, soil conditions, or other local situations.
- Grow crops that will produce a positive trend in the Organic Matter (OM) subfactor value over the life of the rotation, as determined by the Soil Conditioning Index. (management SCI value)
- The crop rotation includes at least 2 years of high residue crops and/or cover crops per 3 years of the rotation. **(See STATE list of high residue crops)**
- For crop diversity, the planned crop sequence of at least 4 different crops should contain at least 3 different crop types; for example a mix of the following: warm season grass; warm season broadleaf; cool season grass; cool season broadleaf.
- Leave crop residue on the soil surface throughout the year.
- Keep a living root system established as much as practical for the given soil, cropping system, and climate area. Maximize root growth periods by planting the next crop or cover crop as soon as practical after the harvest and/or utilize perennial crops in the rotation. Aim to have living roots at least 90% of available growing days. **(See STATE provided guidance of options to maximize living root systems in local climate and cropping systems; determine available growing days and period of no growth, such as frozen periods in the north)**. Show before and after management files from current NRCS wind and water erosion prediction technologies to document benchmark and planned crop rotation to show increase in living root periods.
- Minimize all types of soil disturbance. No more than one crop-year in the rotation will have a Soil Tillage Intensity Rating (STIR) value greater than 20 and the rotation will have a positive trending SCI.

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## Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, provide NRCS with the current and planned crop rotation and planned field operation(s) used for each crop.

### Current Management – Crop Rotation

Field	Acres	Planned Crops (in sequence)	Length of Crop Rotation (years)	Crop Type (Warm Grass-WG, Cool Grass-CG, Warm Broadleaf-WB, Cool Broadleaf-CB)

### Current Management – Field Operations

Field	Crop	Field Operation	Timing of Field Operation (month/year)

**Planned Management – Crop Rotation** *(Crop rotation must include at least 4 different crops from 3 of the different crop types. The rotation must also include 2 years of high residue crops and/or cover crops per 3 years of the rotation. Use STATE list of high residue crops.)*

Field	Acres	Planned Crops (in sequence)	Length of Crop Rotation (years)	Crop Type (Warm Grass-WG, Cool Grass-CG, Warm Broadleaf-WB, Cool Broadleaf-CB)



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## Planned Management – Field Operations

Field	Crop	Field Operation	Timing of Field Operation (month/year)

- During implementation, notify NRCS of any planned changes in crops, crop rotation, or field operations to verify the planned system meets the enhancement criteria.
- During implementation, leave crop residue on the soil surface throughout the year.
- During implementation, take dated pictures with field indicated at least every 3 months to show residue or growing crops.
- After implementation, if changes to the rotation were made, complete the tables above to document the applied Conservation Crop Rotation for the contract period and provide to NRCS.
- After implementation, provide for review pictures showing residue or growing crops throughout the year.

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide technical assistance in selecting crop rotations or substitute crops that would meet the criteria of the enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, verify the enhancement is planned for acres where the conversion from CRP grass/legume conservation cover to annual cropland took place no more than 2 years prior to enrollment in CSP. **Conversion Date:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Prior to implementation, verify the enhancement is not planned on hayland.



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- Prior to implementation, verify the crop rotation includes at least 2 years of high residue crops and/or cover crops per 3 years of the rotation. (Use STATE list of high residue crops)
- Prior to implementation, verify the planned crop rotation includes at least 4 different crops and contains at least 3 different crop types; for example a mix of the following: warm season grass; warm season broadleaf; cool season grass; cool season broadleaf.  
**Planned number of crops:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Planned number of crop types:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Prior to implementation, use information provided from the participant to calculate the management Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) value for each field using current NRCS wind and water erosion prediction technologies. Crop rotation must produce a positive trend in the Organic Matter (OM) subfactor value.  
**Management SCI Value =** \_\_\_\_\_      **OM subfactor value =** \_\_\_\_\_
- During implementation, evaluate planned changes in crops, crop rotation, or field operations to verify the planned system meets the enhancement criteria.
- After implementation, if the applied crop rotation is different than the planned crop rotation, use information provided from the participant to document that the applied rotation met the enhancement criteria.  
**Applied number of crops:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Applied number of crop types:** \_\_\_\_\_
- After implementation, if the applied crop rotation is different than the planned crop rotation, use information provided from the participant to calculate SCI value to document that the applied rotation met the enhancement criteria.  
**Management SCI Value =** \_\_\_\_\_      **OM subfactor value =** \_\_\_\_\_
- After implementation, review pictures showing residue or growing green crops throughout the year to verify the applied system meets the enhancement criteria.

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