**alliance practice worksheet**

MINNESOTA

COVER CROP (340)

*The conditions and specifications below are adapted from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Producers who are installing these practices under the Alliance will use the conditions and implementation guides below but are exempt from NRCS verification and certification. Completing the Purposes and Practice Specifications on this document is sufficient to self-verify practice installation and completion.*

# Farm Info

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Producer Name |  | |
| County (Farm Location) |  | |
| FSA Farm Number |  | |
| FSA Field Number(s) |  | |
| FSA Tract Number(s) |  | |
| Practice Status:  *If a practice has not yet been implemented, select Planned*  *If a practice has been implemented, select Applied* | Planned | Applied |
| Planned Date of IMPLEMENTATION: | Date Practice was APPLIED: |

# PRACTICE: COVER CROP (340)

**DEFINITION:** Grasses, legumes, and forbs planted for seasonal vegetative cover.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES:** This practice applies to all lands requiring seasonal vegetative cover for natural resource protection or improvement.

See [*https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/390/\_\_\_*](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/390/___)to access the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard.

**NOTE:** *Cover Crop (340) has a practice life of one year according to NRCS. Because 340 must be renewed annually, it is eligible for enrollment in the Alliance pilot regardless of previous adoption. If a cover crop has been implemented on your enrolled fields prior to your enrollment in this program, you are required to add an additional species to the cover crop mixture that is implemented during the time of this contract, and that additional species must differ in functional group from the original species used. Cover crops are typically grouped by plant type as grasses, legumes, crucifers, and forbs. For example, to comply with this requirement, if the previous species/mixture contained only grass type species, you must add a legume, crucifer, or forb type species to fulfill the requirement. If the previous cover crop contained a mixture of 3 or more species and all 3 species are from different functional groups, no additional species will be required. However, the composition of the cover crop mixture may be adjusted as long as it complies with the NRCS standards and specification.*

**AT A MINIMUM, PRODUCERS WILL PROVIDE A RECORD OF THE FOLLOWING:**

* Field number and acres
* Species of plant(s) to be established
* Seeding rates
* Seeding dates
* Establishment procedure
* Seed tag
* Rates, timing, and forms of nutrient application (if needed)
* Dates and method to terminate the cover crop
* Other information pertinent to establishing and managing the cover crop e.g., if haying or grazing is planned specify the planned management for haying or grazing.
* Soil conditioning index (SCI) value of implementation year

# GENERAL CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO ALL PURPOSES

* Plant species, seedbed preparation, [seeding rates, seeding dates,](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/395/___) seeding depths, fertility requirements, and planting methods will be consistent with applicable local criteria and soil/site conditions.
* Select species that are compatible with other components of the cropping system.
* Ensure herbicides used with crops are compatible with cover crop selections and purpose(s).
* 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 the production crop yield or harvest.
* Do not burn cover crop residue.
* Determine the method and timing of termination to meet the grower’s objective and the current [NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines.](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/397/___)
* When a cover crop will be grazed or hayed ensure that crop selection(s) comply with pesticide label rotational crop restrictions and that the planned management will not compromise the selected conservation purpose(s).
* Do not harvest cover crops for seed.
* 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.
* Detailed information found in the [NRCS MN Agronomy Technical Note 33 Cover Crop Seeding Guide](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/392/___)

**ADDITIONAL CRITERIA TO MAINTAIN OR INCREASE SOIL HEALTH AND ORGANIC MATTER CONTENT**

* Cover crop species will be selected on the basis of producing higher volumes of organic material and root mass to maintain or increase soil organic matter.
* The planned crop including the cover crop and associated management activities will score a Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) value > 0, as determined using the current approved NRCS Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) procedure, with appropriate adjustments for additions to and or subtractions from plant biomass.
* The cover crop shall be planted as early as possible and be terminated as late as practical for the producer’s cropping system to maximize plant biomass production, considering crop insurance criteria, the time needed to prepare the field for planting the next crop, and soil moisture depletion.

# PLANNED Management:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Field #** | **Acres** | **Species** | **Seeding Rate lbs/ac PLS\*** | **Seeding Date Range** | **Seeding Method** | **Termination Date or Stage** | **Termination Method** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\*To figure Pure Live Seed (PLS) rates, multiply the percent purity by the percent germination. Divide the seeding rate by the percent PLS to find the bulk seed needed per acre. For example: 98% purity X 60% germination = 0.588% PLS 10 lbs/acre X 0.588% PLS = 17 lbs/acre.

Can use the [Cover Crop Design Tool](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/395/___) and attach worksheet in lieu of completing table above.

**Soil Condition Index (SCI) Value** (must be a positive value): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Planted Species and rate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Species: | Total PLS Pounds Planted |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | 3 |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Total Pounds: |  |

# Practice completion

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date Planted |  |
| Planting Method |  |

\*Can use the [Cover Crop Design Tool](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/395/___) and attach worksheet in lieu of completing tables above.

|  |
| --- |
| Notes:  Click or tap here to enter text. |

# OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Evaluate the cover crop to determine if the cover crop is meeting the planned purpose(s). If the cover crop is not meeting the purpose(s) adjust the management, change the species of cover crop, or choose a different technology.

# PRODUCER SELF-CERTIFICATION

By signing below, I certify that I have reviewed all required documentation, and the information outlined above meet all criteria and requirements as defined in the Natural Resources Conservation Service **COVER CROPS (340)** standard and specifications for the identified acres or animal units.

Further, I agree that:

I have not received a payment for this conservation practice on these fields and acres from another USDA Conservation Program or another USDA Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities grant partner.

I will retain all practice documentation to support this certification for up to 12 months following practice adoption and will provide this documentation to the Alliance if selected for a spot check. (Up to 10% of enrolled Alliance participants will be randomly selected for spot checks).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Producer Name:** |  | |
| **Date:** |  |