**alliance practice worksheet**

NORTH DAKOTA

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.*

***NOTE:*** *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.*

***MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR COVER CROP (340):***<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/20658/340_ND_CPS_Cover_Crop_2014>

*Adapted Cover crop species can be found in Table 1 at* <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/43031/>

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

* Field number and acres
* Species of plant(s) to be established
* Seeding method, rates and dates
* Establishment procedure, location map and photos of growth
  + *Please upload documents with the practice worksheet.*

# GENERAL CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO ALL PURPOSES

* 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.
* 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.
* Determine the method and timing of termination to meet the grower’s objective and the current NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines.   
  <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/Termination_Guidelines_Designed_6.28_10.24am_%28002%29.pdf>
* Before cover crops are grazed, they must have produced enough biomass to allow for grazing while maintaining soil health benefits.
* The cover crop will be a mixture of at least 3 species (warm or cool season grasses and broadleaf plants).
* Crops should be seeded to allow at least 4 weeks growth prior to the average first frost date.
* Failed cash crops do not qualify as a cover crop nor do insured crops planted with the intent to be harvested.

# Additional Criteria to Maintain or Increase Soil Health and Organic Matter Content

* Cover crop species will be selected based on producing higher volumes of organic material and root mass to maintain or increase soil organic matter.
* The planned crop rotation 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.

# COVER CROP MIX AND SEEDING RATE

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Species** | **Variety** | **Seed Size** | **Typical Seeding Depth** | **Seeding Rate (lbs/acre)** | **Percent of Mix** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

# ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Information and Details** |
| Seedbed Preparation |  |
| Seeding Date |  |
| Seeding Depth |  |
| Seeding Method |  |
| Fertilizer, as needed |  |
| Weed Management, as needed |  |
| Termination Date (window) |  |
| Termination Method |  |

# ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The cover crop residues on the identified fields were not burned. | Yes | No |
| The planned crop rotation including the cover crop and associated management activities will score a Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) value > 0. | Yes | No |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes:** |

# PRODUCER SELF-CERTIFICATION

By signing below, I certify that I have reviewed all required documentation and have implemented the practice and met all criteria and requirements as defined in the Natural Resources Conservation Service **COVER CROP (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:** |  |