

Name of Practice: Continuous No-till Forage Production System
DCR Specifications for No. SL-15B

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's continuous no-till forage production system best management practice, that are applicable to all contracts, entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

To expand implementation of continuous no-till planting systems, continuous cover, and nutrient management technologies that will result in the reduction of non-point source pollution to state waters from nutrients and sediments.

To reduce erosion by minimizing tillage of soils on cropland. This will improve soil quality by recognizing nutrient management indicators that manage the movement of nitrogen, phosphorous; sediments and runoff with the use of no till planting techniques.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. All crops must be planted using no-till methods.
2. All eligible fields must be converting from a minimum or conventional till system to a continuous no-till system.
3. All eligible fields must have RUSLE2 soil loss calculations comparing the pre-practice conditions and the erosion that occurs after the practice is installed. The RUSLE2 comparison calculations must show a significant reduction in erosion for the field to be eligible. This amount should be entered in the appropriate column on the application form.
4. All eligible fields must have a cropping history two out of the past five years. Permanent grass or hay land is not considered cropland.
5. Cropping rotations that involve the removal of residue are eligible. Land must be covered with an actively growing crop. Straw may remain on the field. All crops must be planted utilizing no till planting methods within thirty (30) days of harvest, grazing or removal of biomass. Participants may receive payments for the Cover Crop practices and the Continuous No-till Forage Production System simultaneously so long as all practice specifications have been met.
6. Cover crops are strongly encouraged throughout the life of the contract. If cover crops are planted, a good stand and good growth of winter cover should be obtained in sufficient time to protect the area in the fall and winter.

7. Producers must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan prepared and signed by a Virginia certified nutrient management planner. Cost-Share payments shall not be made until a current nutrient management plan is on file with the SWCD. SWCD staff should utilize the NMP maps, nutrient balance sheets, and summary sheets to confirm conservation practice implementation. A comparison between crop recommendations and in field conditions shall be used when certifying conservation practice compliance. The plan must include all agricultural production acres under the participants control contained within the tract. A copy of the current nutrient management plan and a nutrient application record keeping form certified and signed as true and accurate by the farmer shall be on file with the SWCD before payment can be issued and maintained in the participant's practice folder. Annual nutrient application record keeping forms for these fields must be provided to the district or the practice will not be in compliance.
8. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, nutrient management plans must be prepared by a certified planner who holds a current Nutrient Management Planner Certificate issued by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Nutrient Management Plans must be written to comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, (4 VAC 50-85-10 et seq.) and the criteria set forth in the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria, revised July 2014
9. State cost-share contracts will be provided only one time per field.
10. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 340 Cover Crop, 328 Conservation Crop Rotation, 590 Nutrient Management, and 595 Integrated Pest Management.
11. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the SWCD throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. As set forth by Virginia Code § 58.1-339.3 and §58.1-439.5, Virginia law currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain BMP practices. The current tax credit rate, which is subject to change in accordance with the Code of Virginia, is 25% of the total eligible cost not to exceed \$17,500.00.

2. If a cooperator receives cost-share, only the cooperator's eligible out-of-pocket share of the project cost is used to determine the tax credit.
3. For participants who certify in writing (*see language on page SL-15B-4*) that they will not utilize the tax credit set forth above with regard to the implementation of this practice and who are not receiving payment for a continuous no-till forage production system from any other source on the same acreage, the state cost-share rate is a one-time incentive payment of \$35 per acre.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and SWCD staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above, and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA), for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

Revised March, 2016

Certification from an Agricultural Best Management Practice Participant that
a Tax Credit will not be Utilized

I, _____ hereby certify that I will not claim the tax credit which is available for participation in the Continuous No-Till Forage Production System, SL-15B practice, and therefore I am eligible for cost-share funding available under that practice for participants who do not wish to utilize the tax credit. I understand that any cost-share funds received must be returned should I claim the tax credit.

Signed: _____

Date: _____