

Name of Practice: VOLUNTARY SMALL GRAIN and MIXED COVER CROP for
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT and RESIDUE MANAGEMENT
DCR Specifications for No. VSL-8B

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's small grain cover crop for nutrient management and residue management best management practice, that are applicable to all contracts, entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice is to document and establish vegetative cover on cropland for protection from erosion and the reduction of nutrient losses to groundwater.

This practice is to keep a cover on cropland, which will help prevent the loss of nutrients. The purpose is to reduce erosion and the leaching of nutrients to ground water. This BMP is designed to utilize the maximum amount of residual nitrogen from previous surface nutrient applications and in the first three feet of the soil profile.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Soil loss calculations using the presently approved NRCS calculation methodology shall be documented and included in the participant file for review during spot checks.
2. No nutrients from any source are allowed between the harvesting of the previous crop and March 1 of the next calendar year. No nutrients are allowed at planting.
3. This practice may be implemented one time without the participant providing a copy of a current nutrient management plan that is being implemented on all of the appropriate agricultural acres contained within the tract to the SWCD. After implementing this practice one time producers must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner. The plan must include all agricultural production acreage contained within the tract that this BMP will be implemented on and must be on file with the local SWCD.
4. A good stand and good growth of winter cover must be obtained in sufficient time to protect the area in the fall and winter. (Ongoing research in Virginia's coastal plain indicates that a cereal grain crop with 30 plants per square foot of field planted with two tillers per plant (60 tillers per sq. ft.) by December 1, provides the optimum biomass for scavenging excess nitrogen while protecting the soil from erosion).
5. All seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seed, have a minimum germination rate of 80% and have no more than 16 restricted noxious weed seeds per pound. If the grower elects to use home grown seed, it must be tested for purity, germination and noxious weeds prior to seeding by a recognized seed laboratory.
6. The practice is intended to keep a vegetative cover on cropland, which will help

prevent the loss of nutrients, by reducing surface erosion and absorbing any excess nutrients from the soil. Current research indicates that early planting of winter rye maximizes the cover crops environmental benefit in Virginia. The SL-8B is not intended to subsidize crops produced for commodity purposes.

7. Harvesting for hay, haylage, silage, grain, straw or seed is not permitted. Pasturing consistent with sound agronomic management is permitted as long as a 60% cover is maintained through March 14. **In years of drought if producers anticipate a need for additional feed harvest, they should apply for the SL-8H practice as harvest is not allowed under this practice.**

8. Select one of following species and/or mixtures of species to plant in all soils:

- i. Rye (Tetraploid) 2 bu./acre
- ii Winter Rye (not tetraploid) 2 bu./acre
- iii. Winter Barley 2 bu./acre
- iv. Winter Hardy Oats 2 bu./acre
- v. Winter Wheat or Triticale..... 2 bu./acre
- vi. Winter Annual ryegrass 20 lbs./acre
- vii. Small grain mixtures..... 1 bu./acre with
 - a) legume† 10 lbs./acre or,
 - b) Diakon (forage or tillage) radish... 6 lb./ acre or,
 - c) canola or rape 4 lbs./acre
- viii. Diakon (forage or tillage) radish 6-8 lbs./acre°
 - mixture with annual rye grass 10 lbs./acre
- ix. Winter-hardy *Brassica* (canola/rape) .. 5 -7 lbs./acre°
 - mixture with annual rye grass 10 lbs./acre

† - legume = Crimson Clover, Austrian Winter Pea or Hairy Vetch

°Use higher seeding rates for pure stands and lower seeding rates for mixed species plantings

Higher seeding rates are recommended for aerial seeding.

9. Seeding of all seed types must be planted by the dates listed below:

	Early <u>Planting date</u>	Standard <u>Planting date</u>
i. Cities of Chesapeake & VA Beach.....	November 10	November 30
ii. Coastal Plain.....	October 25	November 15
iii. Piedmont.....	October 10	November 1
iv. Mountain and Valley.....	October 5	October 25

10. In all cases, this practice is subject to NRCS standard 340.

11. The cover crop must be killed using mechanical or chemical means or by grazing no earlier than **March 15** and no later than **May 15 for the coastal plain, piedmont, and mountain and valley**. The cover crop residue may be left on the field for conservation purposes; or the cover crop or its residue may be tilled under. The

practice will be considered complete once the cover crop has served its purpose and been killed.

C. 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.

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