Disaster Winter Forage Crop Incentive

Definition/Purpose

A Disaster Winter Forage Crop is a crop of small grain or grass grown to supplement winter forage where existing forage (stored or unharvested) was lost or damaged as a result of a natural disaster. This practice may also be used to extend the land application season where necessary to manage waste lagoons where excessive rainfall late in the application season threatens an operation's ability to manage lagoon levels on existing waste utilization plan (WUP) acres and crops. The purpose is to scavenge and cycle plant nutrients. The winter forage crop also adds organic matter to the soil, improves infiltration, aeration and tilth, improves soil quality, reduces soil crusting, provides residue for conservation tillage, and sequesters carbon.

Policies

1. For a disaster winter forage crop to accomplish the purpose of this practice, it must become quickly established, grow vigorously, and accumulate significant biomass. Only the following crops are eligible for this incentive. They **must** be planted by the planting deadline and sown at the seeding rates given below for each region.

Crop	Minimum Planting Rate	Coastal Plain Plant Deadline	Piedmont Plant Deadline	Mountains Plant Deadline
Barley	2-3 bu	Oct. 15	Oct. 10	Oct. 10
Oats	3 bu	Oct. 15	Oct. 10	Nov.1
Rye	2 bu	Nov. 30	Nov. 30	Nov.1
Triticale	90 lb	Nov. 30	Nov. 30	Nov.1
Wheat	2-3 bu	Nov. 30	Nov. 30	Nov.1
Annual Ryegrass	2 bu	Nov. 30	Nov. 30	Nov.1

*Note: Planting deadline in standard print and earliest kill date shown in *italics*.

2. The incentive rate for this practice is $20/acre.

3. This practice shall not be used to plant a forage crop for applying animal waste on fields included in an existing WUP if the existing plan already includes fall-planted annuals as part of the existing WUP. However, if the operation had already planted fall annuals, and the crop was killed due to flooding, the damaged fields are eligible for this practice.

4. Seedbed preparation may be done by any suitable method. Seedbed preparation may be eliminated when the crops are seeded by broadcasting into a standing crop, into residues of a previous crop by conservation tillage methods or when the harvesting procedure or residue shredding will cover seeds. No-till methods are preferred.

5. Drill or broadcast methods of seeding may be used.

6. No payment for this incentive shall be made until the crop has emerged and a suitable stand can be documented.

7. Certified seeds or bin seed may be used to receive the incentive payment. **Cooperators using bin seed must be careful to adhere to the restrictions imposed by the federal Plant Variety Protection Act, the NC seed rules and statutes, and laws governing the use of seed from patented plants.**

8. Growers who have previously received state or federal cost share for any conservation tillage practice are eligible for this BMP.

9. When determining the acreage for which payments can be made for this practice, only the acreage actually planted shall be considered. The area occupied by farm roads, best management practices, ditches, structures, etc. shall not be included in planted acreage.

10. Producers who use this practice for the purpose of managing lagoon levels must follow all applicable requirements of the Department of Environmental Quality, including soil sampling, setbacks, and temporary modifications to waste utilization plans.

11. This practice can be used in conjunction with Disaster Lagoon Management Incentive and Disaster Pasture Renovation.

12. This disaster practice does not count against any annual or lifetime limit for conservation tillage, cover crops, or nutrient scavenger crops.

Standards

NC NRCS Technical Guide, Section IV, Standard #340 (Cover Crop), # 328 (Conservation Cropping Rotation)