

Watershed Agricultural Program SOP

2.1.12.2

Cover Crops:

1. All active WAP participating farms with a nutrient management plan are eligible for Cover Crop BMP's. Fields are only eligible for one cover crop establishment per calendar year.
2. Annual budgeting of cover crop BMPs will be determined by the Project Planning Group using the BMP Prioritization and workload development process detailed in Guideline 3.1.01 (Guideline for BMP Prioritization)
3. Specifications for all cover crop seed, species selection, seeding methods, seeding rates, establishment timing, and termination methods will follow *NRCS NY Vegetative Practice Specification 340- Cover Crop*.
4. Cover Crop BMPs will be added to the WFP as a set of five individual BMP's, each representing one year of cover crop establishment. (Example BMP 5a, 5b, 5c etc.) Upon completion of all five BMPs, a WFP revision will be necessary to add another set of BMPs if resource concerns still exist. Planned acres for each year shall be the maximum possible acres to be planted. BMP design packages will be developed annually by WAP staff with specific acres planned for the current crop year. BMP design packages will include the *NRCS NY Cover Crop Seed Rate Calculator with Implementation Requirements for NY-340-version 2.0 July 2017*. This document is available through the *NRCS NY eFOTG* website.
5. The cost per acre price for cover crop establishment, including seed, will be capped at \$80.00, regardless of species planted and seeding methods used. A field visit by WAP staff to verify successful cover crop establishment is required prior to BMP certification. WAP BMP Procurement Procedure will be followed.
6. As per the *NRCS NY Vegetative Practice Specification 340- Cover Crop*, in reference to *Table 1 – New York Cover Crop Seeding dates by Hardiness Zone*, certain species may meet performance objectives if planted after the latest allowed date in some years. When cover crops are planted beyond the set NRCS latest allowed date, WAP staff will assess the cover crop at subsequent dates following plant emergence to document that necessary vegetative cover and biomass levels are met before certification and payment can be completed for the BMP.
7. Nurse/companion cover crops used in establishment of a new forage seeding will not be eligible as a WAP BMP.
8. WAP funded cover crops may be grazed, harvested for forage or head straw, but may not be harvested for seed or grain.

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