

MGR-19-017: Cover Crop Guidance for the 2020 and Succeeding Crop Years

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Date

June 28, 2019

To

All Approved Insurance Providers

All Risk Management Agency Field Offices

All Other Interested Parties

From

Martin R. Barbre, Administrator /s/ Martin R. Barbre

Subject

Cover Crop Guidance for the 2020 and Succeeding Crop Years

Background

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) mandated changes to the treatment of cover crops for insurance purposes. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has worked with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop new Guidelines (previously referred to as *NRCS Termination Guidelines*) and policy provisions to comply with the 2018 Farm Bill changes.

Action

For crops planted following a cover crop in the 2020 crop year and later:

- The Guidelines provide producers with added flexibility for terminating cover crops while remaining eligible for crop insurance.
- Insurance will attach at time of planting the insured crop and cover crop management practices will be reviewed under RMA rules for Good Farming

Practice (GFP) determinations similar to other management decisions (e.g. fertilizer application, seeding rates, etc.).

- The summerfallow statement has been revised to include standard exceptions to the Guidelines, allowing more flexibility to address failed crops and dates for terminating any regrowth of the failed crop.
- The summerfallow statement has been revised to allow cover crops to be planted on land during the summerfallow period, as specified in the Special Provisions and the Guidelines.
- Cover crops may be planted on summerfallow acres in Oregon and Washington counties, as specified in the Special Provisions, affected by 2018 fires as a soil conservation practice.

The Guidelines serve as a recognized nationally applicable agricultural expert resource for cover crop termination in cover cropping management systems. The resource is applicable to all USDA programs and promote consistent, simple and flexible policy across the three agencies. The Guidelines include information on cover crops and crop insurance, Good Farming Practices for cover crops, and termination information and exceptions, which can be found at www.rma.usda.gov/about-crop-insurance/highlighted-initiatives-plans/cover-crops.

DISPOSAL DATE:

December 31, 2019.