

Continuing Conservation Initiative
Name of Practice: LONG TERM CONTINUOUS NO-TILL PLANTING SYSTEMS
VACS Program Specifications for No. CCI - CNT

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Continuous Conservation Initiative Long Term Continuous No-Till Planting Systems best management practice, which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice will implement a continuous no-till planting systems and nutrient management planning technologies that result in the reduction of non-point source pollution to state waters from nutrients and sediments. The practice will increase biomass/soil quality and manage the residue to reduce the movement of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediments and runoff with the use of no-till planting systems.

This long term continuous no-till planting systems reporting practice is designed to provide a financial incentive to assure that lands being managed under continuous no-till planting systems are reported to DCR. These no till systems are required to be effective and functioning as designed throughout the lifespan of this practice.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Eligibility

- i. Eligible land must be managed under a continuous no-till planting system that results in a **minimum of 60% residue cover** on all of the enrolled acres and must be maintained for the lifespan of the practice. Prior to practice authorization, Districts must verify that no-till planting methods have been utilized on site and that 60% cover exists on the land. Land enrolled in an active SL-15A practice **is not eligible for CCI- CNT**.
- ii. All eligible fields must have a cropping history two out of the past five years. Only multi-year, multi-crop rotations on cropland that include at least two crops of small grain or cover crop in five years are eligible. All required small grain crops may be harvested for grain only. Straw must remain on the field. Permanent grass or hay land is not considered cropland.
- iii. Participants may not receive CCI-CNT payments and Nutrient Offset Credits on the same acres simultaneously.
- iv. In order to be eligible for cost-share, producers must be fully implementing a current Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) on all agricultural production acreage contained within the field on which this practice will be implemented. The NMP must comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations (4VAC50-85 et seq.) and the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria (revised July 2014); must be prepared and certified by a Virginia certified Nutrient Management Planner; and must be on file with the local District before any cost-share payment is made to the participant. Plans shall also contain any specific

production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).

2. The practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.
3. Practice Development
 - i. If the planting of a cover crop is needed to maintain biomass, the producer is eligible to plant cover under SL-8B or WQ-4.
 - ii. The system must be maintained for a minimum of five years.
 - iii. All crops must be planted using no-till methods.
4. Practice Implementation
 - i. Biomass requirements for cash grain, oilseed, cotton and small grain rotations must maintain a minimum of 60% residue cover on the enrolled acres and must be maintained for the lifespan of the practice.
 - ii. This practice is subject to **annual** spot checks by District staff throughout its lifespan.
 - iii. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 340 Cover Crop, 328 Conservation Crop Rotation, and 595 Pest Management.
5. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the calendar year of certification of completion. By accepting cost-share payment for this practice, the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost- share.

C. Rate(s)

The VACS payment rate is an incentive payment of \$5 per acre for the life of the practice. Payment for the five year contract will be made the first year of the contract and will be calculated at (\$5/acre) x (number of acres in the contract) x (5 years).

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District 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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