# LENRD COVER CROP GUIDELINES

Eligibility: May be used on Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Non-Highly Erodible (NHEL) land that is currently in a continuous no-till cropping system. Application may be into corn, soybean, or small grain fields. HEL fields where corn has been cut for silage are not eligible.

Acreage Limits: Each participant (operator) will enroll a total of 10-80 acres (minimum contract amount is $200.00). Participants in this practice will apply on LENRD 100a form for Cover Crop Seeding each year for up to three consecutive years. Applications must specify a seeding option (1, 2 or 3) and seed mixture option (a, b, or c).

Participants may change seed mix alternatives and seeding options in the three year period, but must have approval from the LENRD prior to planting the cover crop.

The producer is responsible for obtaining their own seed according to NRCS specifications and arranging for seeding either by pilot or ground application. The producer also must terminate the cover crop per NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines, without inversion tillage. During dry conditions, an earlier than normal termination should be considered. Likewise, during wet conditions, a later than normal termination should be considered. The NRCS Cover Crop Standard requires a minimum of 6"-8" of above ground growth before termination but 12" or more is optimal.

## Three Cover Crop Seed Mix Alternatives:

a. Single Species - $20/ac - rye, triticale or wheat provides erosion control and nitrate and phosphorous sequestration. Single Species Mix specifications will be provided by NRCS according to Seeding Option selected.

b. Multi-species (two to three) Mix - $30/ac - provides erosion control, nitrate and phosphorous sequestration, diverse rooting systems to enhance soil biology, and can include soil fertility/nitrogen fixing capabilities of legumes . Multi-species mix specifications will be provided by NRCS according to Seeding Option selected.

c. Deluxe Multi-species (5 or more) Mix - $50/ac - provides erosion control, nitrate and phosphorous sequestration, diverse rooting systems to enhance soil biology, and the soil fertility/nitrogen fixing capabilities of legumes. Deluxe multi-species mix specifications will be provided by NRCS according to Seeding Option selected.

# LENRD COVER CROP GUIDELINES (Cont.)

**Three Cover Crop Seeding Options:**

1) Aerial/Ground Driven *Surface Seeding*: Aerial application or ground application by hi-boy (system that can be used in standing crops) will be performed starting in the last week of August to third week of September.  The optimum timing will be at or shortly before soybean and corn plant senescence or yellowing of the lower leaves.

If the producer is not able to get the surface seeding performed by the third week in September they must no-till drill the cover crop immediately following harvest (by October 25).

Seeding mixes will be:
      a.  Single species seedings
      b.  Multi-species (two to three) mix

2) *Expanded Crop Rotations*:   This option will utilize seed mix C.  Deluxe Multi-species and encourages transitions to corn/soybeans/wheat or small grains crop rotations.  The Deluxe Multi-species will be no-till drilled into small grains stubble following harvest, in the late July to mid August time frame.

Fall and spring grazing of the cover crops will be allowed within guidelines.  It is important to take up to only half of the existing growth by grazing.  A minimum of 6-8" inches of cover crop growth will be left in the field.  Grazing management will be important in cover cropped fields to avoid damage due to saturated springtime field conditions.

3) *Post Harvest No-till Drilled* cover crops.  This option may require altering the maturities of cash crops to allow for earlier harvest and no-till drilling the cover crops.  Post-harvest no-till seeding must be completed by October 25 in soybean stubble.  Post-harvest "dormant" no-till seeding can be completed up to two weeks following corn harvest.
This option can be:
      a. Single species following corn or soybean crops
      b. Multi-species (two to three) mix

July 2019