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# NATURAL RESOURCES

Michael L. Parson, Governor


Carol S. Comer, Director

## MEMORANDUM

2019-002

DATE: July 6, 2018

TO: All Soil and Water Conservation Districts

FROM:  Colleen Meredith, Director  
Soil and Water Conservation Program

SUBJECT: DSL-01 Permanent Vegetative Cover Establishment and  
N340 Cover Crop Policy Updates

The Soil and Water Districts Commission meeting, during their June 13, 2018 meeting, approved policy changes to the DSL-01 Permanent Vegetative Cover Establishment and N340 Cover Crop practices.

For the DSL-01 practice, the Commission made changes to the erosion requirement allowing a field to qualify based on ephemeral gully erosion. Therefore, a field can now qualify for the practice based on sheet and rill erosion or ephemeral gully erosion. To qualify for the practice based on ephemeral gully erosion, the post-installation erosion rates must be less than the pre-installation rates.

The N340 Cover Crop practice is still a new practice and continues to be evaluated by the Commission. One of the most common variance requests received by the Commission is related to tillage for establishing the cover crop. The Commission asked the Current Practices Committee to review the no-till policy for cover crops. Based on the committee's recommendation, the Commission approved allowing minimal soil disturbance during the establishment of the cover crops.

The minimal disturbance will be based on the tillage having a Soil Tillage Intensity Rating (STIR) value of 20 or less as calculated in RUSLE2. The calculation of the STIR value will be for the establishment of the cover crop not the whole cropping rotation. Even though the Commission now allows minimal soil disturbance to establish cover crops, cooperators should be encouraged to consider no-tilling the seed to get the full soil health benefits of using cover crops.

An updated Cost-Share Handbook will be placed on the SWCD Intranet with these practice policy changes. The districts will be notified via email when the handbook is updated.

If you have any questions, please contact your district coordinator. Thank you.

CM:jpd

