



Agriculture Newsletter Spring 2013



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Crop Rotation Considerations

Rotating crops can provide a wide array of benefits to the farm, including pest control, weed control, improved soil conditions, and increased crop yields. The extent of these benefits is dependent on the sequence and type of crops grown, environmental factors, the farmer's aspirations, as well as economic factors. Listed below are few general guidelines to consider when choosing a crop rotation.

- 1. Add Diversity.** Planting non-related species in rotation year to year or season to season can minimize pest problems. Nematodes, diseases, and insects often attack species related to one another.
- 2. Incorporate a legume.** Many legumes are able to provide a usable source of nitrogen



to succeeding crops with the help of nitrogen - fixing bacteria called Rhizobia that attach to the roots of the legume. By planting a legume crop before a crop that has a high nitrogen requirement, it will decrease the need to add other sources of nitrogen such as manure and fertilizer.

3. Keep residues. Use residues from crops to increase/maintain the organic matter content of the soil for increased soil health and fertility.

4. Extend the presence of perennial crops. Utilize perennial crops longer in rotation as a form of erosion control on slopes and weakly-structured soil. The roots of these crops stabilize soil.

5. Add deep-rooting crops. Deep-rooted crops can retrieve nutrients in the subsoil that shallow-rooted crops cannot obtain. They can also encourage water infiltration since channels are left in the soil once the roots decay.

6. Don't grow an annual crop more than a year. This will prevent nematodes, insects, and diseases from becoming a significant problem. Shortening the amount of time an annual crop resides in rotation shortens the amount of time a pest has to multiply and cause damage to the crop it prefers.

7. Incorporate Cover Crops & Interseeding Practices. Using cover crops before, after, and in between the rows of a cash crop can reduce weed competition, curtail pest problems, and eliminate soil erosion.

8. Make a list. If many crops are grown on the farm, make a list of each crop's characteristics, needs, and pest problems to help organize a successful long term rotation.



Conservation Planner Calendars

- FREE 2013-2014 Conservation Planner Calendars are now available at the District Office. The calendars are loaded with tips and helpful guidelines regarding soil and manure management, and there is even a place to document monthly activities on your farm.



Financial Aid

Programs Deadlines and Application Dates

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) offer a continuous signup opportunity. Applications are reviewed as funds are available, and financial assistance is offered to the highest ranking applicants. People interested in conservation program funding assistance should not wait until a formally announced ranking period to apply.

The following dates reflect times when NRCS will review and rank all applications received for the specific listed option. Potential applicants interested in these options are encouraged to have an updated application filed with their [local NRCS office](#) by the listed date.

Program	Description	Due Date
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Applications will be accepted for 2013 CSP funding but contracts are not currently being offered due to limited funding.	Continuous
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	Dates to apply for the national 2013 CRP General Signup 45 (administered by USDA Farm Service Agency)	May 20, 2013 - June 14, 2013
WHIP/Working Lands for Wildlife: Bog Turtle and Golden-Winged Warbler options	Apply for first round funding consideration	April 15, 2013
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) On-Farm Energy, Organic and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives	Apply for third round funding through the national Air Quality, On-Farm Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives	April 15, 2013
AMA, CSP, EQIP, GRP, WHIP	2013 funding consideration - first application review cycle	April 19, 2013

The information above is found at the NRCS website:

http://www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/programforms/program_dates.html

For more information or questions on these programs, contact NRCS at 814-375-2125.



Regulation Reminders

Manure Management Plans: Farm Map Requirements

A farm map is an essential component of all manure management plans. The map may be hand drawn, or you can use a computer-generated map. PA OneStop (www.paonestop.com) is one available option. Listed below are the important features to include in your map.

1. Farm boundaries
2. Field boundaries
3. Field labels & acreage of each field
4. For fields receiving winter application of manure: average slope or average NRCS slope designation (can use NRCS soil survey map available at the district or the NRCS office)
5. Location of all environmentally sensitive areas and their setbacks (see manual for specific information)
6. Manure storage facilities (existing or proposed)
7. Manure stockpiling & stacking areas
8. Pastures
9. Animal Concentration Areas
10. Roads (names included) next to the farm and within the farm



Upcoming Events

Manure Management Workshop

Please join us at the District on April 23rd, 2013 from 9:00AM - 3:00PM for a Manure Management Workshop. This year's workshop will focus on practices that prevent pollution in your watershed. We have enclosed a brochure for this workshop. Please return this registration form and check by April 19th. Cost is only 5.00 to attend and includes a pizza lunch. For more information, contact the district office at (814) 849 - 7463.