

Continuing Conservation Initiative
Name of Practice: LONG TERM VEGETATIVE COVER ON CROPLAND –
MAINTENANCE PRACTICE
VACS Program Specifications for No. CCI-SL-1

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Long Term Vegetative Cover on Cropland best management practice which is applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

Grass and/or legume vegetation will be maintained on previously converted cropland which had less than 60% cover under that land use. The continued maintenance of hayland or pasture converted from cropland further reduces soil erosion and enhances water quality.

The purpose of this practice is to offer an incentive to maintain long-term vegetative cover as a well-maintained sod on converted cropland.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Eligibility:

- i. Prior to practice authorization, Districts must verify that the participant was previously enrolled in the SL-1 practice for the minimum contract period on the acres entered into this contract. SL-1 and CC-SL-1 lifespans must be continuous.
- ii. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, 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 CCI-SL-1 production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VAC50-85-130G). The NMP can be either a one-year or three-year plan that is updated to continuously cover the acreage or a five-year grass and hayland plan. This is to ensure proper nutrient application for a successful practice. This plan must be prepared and signed by a Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner and on file with the SWCD before a cost-share payment can be made.
- iii. Land enrolled in an active SL-1 practice is not eligible for CCI- SL-1.
 - a. Land can only be enrolled in a combination of SL-1 and CCI-SL-1 for an additional five years, totaling no more than 15 years for both contracts.

2. Soil loss rates must be computed for all applications for use in establishing priority considerations and reflect at minimum a three-year cropping history.
3. Pastures and haylands that are enrolled under this practice will be grazed or harvested and maintained in accordance with NRCS Standard 512 for the lifespan. Cost-share will be refunded if the cover is destroyed during the lifespan. This practice is subject to verifications by the District throughout the life of the practice and failure to comply may result in the forfeiture of the funds.
4. State cost-share contracts for the CCI-SL-1 will be provided only one time per field, while that field is under the same ownership.
5. State cost-share is allowable only for BMP installations that are not receiving cost-share from other sources.
6. Cost-share is not authorized for obstruction removal, fencing, or watering facilities.
7. Fertility - Lime and fertilizer can be applied for maintenance purposes but must be done in accordance with current soil test recommendations (at Virginia Cooperative Extension maintenance rates for the appropriate sod species). Maintenance applications are the obligation of the participant. If biosolids or manure is used, the material must be properly sampled and tested for nutrient content and given credit in fertilizer recommendations.
8. Cost-share is not authorized for the planting of pure stands of alfalfa.
9. All practice components implemented under the original SL-1 contract must be maintained for a minimum of five years following the calendar year of certification of completion. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit 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 and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. The VACS payment rate is an incentive payment of \$50 per acre for the life of the practice. Payment for the five-year contract will be made in the first year of the contract.

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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