

Name of Practice: SIDEDRESS APPLICATION OF NITROGEN ON CORN, GRAIN
SORGHUM, AND/OR COTTON
VACS Program Specification for No. NM-3C

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Sidedress Application of Nitrogen on Corn, Grain Sorghum, and/or Cotton practice which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice will encourage the sidedress application of nitrogen (organic OR inorganic) on corn, grain sorghum, and/or cotton. For fields receiving only nitrogen fertilizer, sidedress applications will be based upon soil sample results and the Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). All secondary or sidedress applications will be applied at a growth stage when the plant is entering the highest demand for nitrogen: corn at 15" to 24" tall; grain sorghum at 12" to 18" tall; cotton between first square and first (white) bloom.

For fields that have previously received manure or biosolids applications according to the current NMP or have high biomass legume cover crop, a pre-sidedress nitrate test (PSNT) will be used to determine the amount of nitrogen necessary in the sidedress application.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Eligibility:

- i. Eligibility for this practice is limited to the length of the plan recommending the sidedress practice.
- ii. The producer must provide a written verification (such as a work order or bill) to the district within two weeks of the sidedress application when the application has been contracted out.
- iii. The total number of corn, sorghum, and/or cotton acres specified by the nutrient management plan to be sidedressed will determine the maximum acres to qualify.
- iv. 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 production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).
- v. District staff should utilize the NMP maps, nutrient balance sheets, and summary sheets to confirm practice implementation. A comparison between crop recommendations and in field conditions shall be used when certifying conservation practice compliance.

2. The total number of corn acres specified by the nutrient management plan to receive manure, or have a high biomass legume cover crop, will determine the maximum acres to qualify for cost-share payment for the PSNT. Cost-share payment for PSNT laboratory analysis will be made only for those PSNT tests that are submitted for laboratory analysis.
 - i. The PSNT must be done when corn is approximately 12 inches in height.
 - ii. PSNT samples should represent a minimum of 7 acres on average and a maximum of 20 acres on average.
3. Checks to ensure compliance with this practice may be conducted by the District or appropriate agency personnel and failure to comply may result in forfeiture of cost-share funds.
4. The producer must sign up prior to April 1 and provide a written verification of contracted sidedress application cost (including the PSNT results) to the District within two weeks of the sample analysis.
5. Application of any sidedress nitrogen must be made after the corn is at the 6-leaf stage or at least 15 inches in height, grain sorghum is at the 5-leaf stage or at least 12 inches in height, or cotton is between the first square and first bloom stage.
6. A minimum of 20 lbs of inorganic nitrogen per acre must be applied to be considered a sidedress application for the management of nitrogen.
7. Total nitrogen to be applied to the corn, grain sorghum, and/or cotton field must be consistent with the nutrient management plan or determined by using a PSNT (as applicable for corn) consistent with procedures contained in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations (4VAC50-85 et. Seq).
8. Acres receiving a zero application rate based on a PSNT result also qualify for a payment rate of \$6 per acre. This is for manure or high biomass legumes only; biosolids are not eligible for payment.
9. This is an annual practice.

C. Rate(s)

1. As set forth by Virginia Code, the Commonwealth currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain agricultural best management practices as discussed in the Tax Credit Guidelines of the VACS Manual. Participants may receive either a cost-share payment or a tax credit for implementation of this practice but not both on the same acre.
2. A VACS payment rate of \$6.00 per acre for the sidedress application, shall be paid based upon the contracted sidedress application acreage. Producers applying their own sidedress applications will receive \$6.00 per acre applied.

3. Costs for PSNT sample collection and analysis by a commercial laboratory that are used to implement this practice will be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$12.00 per sample. The reimbursement flat rate can only be utilized once per sample, samples should represent a minimum of 7 acres on average and a maximum of 20 acres on average.

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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