

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

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Voluntary 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 document 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. Farmer must keep a written verification (such as a work order, bill or field records) to document the application.
- iii. 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. Plans shall also contain any specific production management criteria designated in the BMP practice (4VACV50-85-130G).
- iv. 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. Checks to ensure compliance with this practice may be conducted by the District or appropriate agency personnel.

3. 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.
4. A minimum of 20 lbs of inorganic nitrogen per acre must be applied to be considered a sidedress application for the management of nitrogen.
5. 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 consistent with procedures contained in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations (4 VAC 50-85 et. Seq).
6. This is an annual practice.
7. The practice must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.

C. 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.

Revised April 2024