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COVER CROP FOR CRP

and other grass seedings

Establishing a good cover crop is essential to successfully establishing a grass stand. Also, an adequate cover crop is required when receiving federal funds for planting cropland to grass, whether it is under the CRP or another program.

Forage sorghum, long-season (120-day) milo, or millet can be used as a cover crop. Drill the 120-day milo around mid-June. On sandy soil, clip the crop to a 12-15 inch stubble height. On loamy soil, clip the cover crop to a 12 inch (minimum) height. If a crop is not clipped, a strong wind can break the stalk at ground level.

Cover crops should be cut while the plants are still green to prevent knocking them down. The clipped portion should be removed from the field, unless not allowed by the program. Under the CRP program, material can be removed from the field only if the contract is not yet in effect. If the CRP contract is in effect, we recommend planting the 120-day milo in mid-June. Check with NRCS or FSA to determine whether any of the crop can be removed from the field.

NOTE: Your cover crop must be certified by NRCS prior to grass seeding. Planting a good crop now will prevent problems later. If you seed into an unacceptable cover crop, your grass seeding payment may be delayed until stand establishment.

Call your USDA Service Center for more information.