EQIP PRACTICE GUIDELINES
Conservation Crop Rotation (328): One, Two, or Three Years Fallow

Practice Life: 1 to 3 years

Participant: _____

EQIP Contract Number: _____

Purposes of Cost Share Practice: The primary purpose of this practice scenario is to improve multiple wildlife habitat components including food, nesting cover, and escape cover for various upland species including quail and other upland birds in cropland areas. Fallow or idle areas are essential nesting and overwintering habitat for many species and should be considered essential components of the landscape. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, fallow areas can reduce erosion, protect water quality by trapping sediment, chemicals and other pollutants, and can serve as buffers for sensitive areas when applying pesticides or fertilizers. Similar to a sod-based rotation, fallowing can improve soil quality and in some cases support IPM strategies that control weeds and crop pests.

Conditions for Practice Eligibility: Applicants must meet all EQIP requirements to be eligible for financial assistance. Applicants must offer cropland where annual row or close-growing crops are produced to be considered for enrollment. This practice scenario does NOT apply to pastureland, hayland, or other land uses where crops are only occasionally grown to facilitate renovation or re-establishment of orchards, vineyards, or nurseries.

Minimum Practice Requirements (EQIP payment rate includes all practice requirements)

- Practice will be certified as installed when vegetative cover has been established by planting following current growing season harvest.
- Establish vegetation using specifications taken from NC-FOTG Practice Standard 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management Appendix I: Planting Perennial Grasses & Forbs for Wildlife OR Appendix II: Planting Food Plots & Temporary Cover for Wildlife to determine species composition, seeding rates, and planting season for vegetative cover.
- Activities that cause soil disturbance or loss of vegetative cover within the planned areas under contract such as disking, mowing, or burning are prohibited for the life of the practice.
- Use of pesticides will be prohibited within planned areas under contract for the life of the practice. A written exemption may be granted by the state biologist or state agronomist in cases where serious plant pest problems occur.
- Practice must be part of a contract that obligates at least $1000.

Considerations

- If exotic invasive or noxious plants are present, consider eradication prior to practice implementation.
- When possible, time management activities to minimize disturbance of seasonal wildlife activities, with special consideration for nesting season.
- Consider planting a mixture composed of multiple seed producing annuals to ensure forage production and regeneration in years two and three.
- Vegetative cover can be established in the fall using cool season small grain such as wheat or oats or in the spring by utilizing warm season annuals such as sunflower, various millets, or grain sorghum.

Conservation Crop Rotation (328) - Fallow Systems

EQIP Record Keeping Document

Participant:_____

EQIP Contract No:_____

Tract:_____

Field:_____

1st Year Establishment Record

Date Planted	*Acres Planted*	*Species Planted* *(e.g. – wheat, oats, etc)*	*Seeding Rate* *(bulk lbs/ac)*

I certify that I have established vegetative cover as specified in my Conservation Plan and attached guidance documents including job sheets:

_____

Signature of participant **Date**

This practice has been installed according to NRCS specifications and meets the EQIP requirements and the Conservation Crop Rotation (328) practice criteria.

_____ acres of vegetative cover are determined to have been installed.

_____

Designated Conservationist **Date**

2nd and 3rd Operation and Maintenance Recordkeeping (Use when contract included a 2 or 3-year fallow rotation):

Date of Inspection	*Acres with fallow cover*	*Participant initials*	*Designated Conservationist initials/comments*