



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46278

INDIANA BULLETIN NO. 190-6-1

SUBJECT: ECS – Variance Requests for Dormant Seeding of Warm Season Grasses

Purpose: To transmit the availability and procedures for requesting a variance to NRCS Indiana Field Office Technical Guide Standards for dormant seeding of Warm Season Grasses.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2006.

Action Required By: February 3, 2006

Individuals and groups have indicated an interest in seeding Warm Season grasses (WSG) outside the accepted seeding window in the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) of April through June. With the high demand for establishing WSG in Indiana, there are often not enough drills available within the dates allowed by the FOTG.

Due to the success of WSG dormant seeding in surrounding states, NRCS Indiana is offering a variance to several FOTG standards for the establishment of WSG during the dormant period of December 1 through March 15. This is a one-time variance.

This option will be available for up to 750 acres in Indiana this winter (variances will be granted on a first-requested, first-served basis) for the following FOTG practices currently scheduled in approved conservation plans:

1. Conservation Cover (327)
2. Field Border (386)
3. Filter Strip (393)
4. Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

If producers have a need to seed WSG during the dormant season of December 1, 2005, through March 15, 2006, please follow the following process:

1. The **NRCS District Conservationist (DC)** must complete and e-mail the attached “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” form **prior to February 3, 2006** to Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist, at shannon.zezula@in.usda.gov.
2. All approved “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” forms will be signed by Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist, and returned to the NRCS District Conservationist.
 - a. Only producers who are approved for the WSG dormant seeding variance, as documented by the signed “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request”, are assured of remaining in compliance with their Farm Bill program contract, and being eligible for cost-share, dependant on available funding, for reseedling if the dormant seeding is not a success.
 - i. All “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” forms must be approved **prior to** planting WSG during the dormant season.

DIST: O

- ii. WSG planted during the dormant season without an approved “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” do not meet NRCS standards and specifications and are not eligible for programs cost-share.
3. The approved “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” must be filed in the producer’s NRCS Field Office case file.
 - a. Provide a copy of the “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” form to the producer as documentation.
 - b. If the producer is a participant in a Farm Service Agency (FSA)-administered program, ensure the local FSA office also receives a copy of the approved “WSG Dormant Seeding Variance Request” form.
4. The NRCS DC and/or other conservation professionals will work directly with the producer to ensure the following seeding requirements are met:
 - a. Seeding rate is increased by 15%
 - i. NOTE: existing program contract Cost/Units will not be modified to cover any additional expenses incurred by producers for seeding WSG during the dormant season.
 - b. WSG dormant seeding is only eligible in crop stubble, not in sod.
 - c. Only drills designed to seed WSG are authorized.
 - d. Seed WSG no deeper than ¼ inch deep.
 - e. WSG must be seeded only when the soil temperature is below 50 F.
 - i. For the purposes of this variance, WSG must be seeded between December 1, 2005, and March 15, 2006, in Indiana.
 - f. An approved pre-emergence herbicide will be applied in the spring.
 - i. Producers should consult the local Purdue University Extension office for recommendations on approved pre-emergence herbicides to use for WSG establishment.
5. NRCS Indiana State Office Technology Staff will evaluate several of these plantings in September, 2006, and in future years if needed to determine the success of this option.
 - a. If this option proves successful, NRCS Indiana FOTG Standards will be updated to allow dormant seeding as a viable option in the future.

Questions related to this bulletin will be directed to Shannon Zezula, State Resource Conservationist, at (317) 290-3200, ext. 388.

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY

cc: Gary Langell, IDNR, 553 E. Miller Drive, Bloomington, IN 47401
Andy Edwards, Pheasants Forever, 7404 1400N, Silver Lake, IN 46982
Doug Hovermale, FSA, Indianapolis, IN
Brian MacGowan, Purdue University, P.O. Box 265, Brookville, IN 47012