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New USDA Guidelines on Cover Crop Termination Will Improve Conservation, Provide Flexibility for Farmers

Washington, DC, July 9, 2019 – AGree’s [Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force](#) (Task Force) applauds the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [guidelines](#) on cover crop termination, which provides important flexibility and greater certainty for farmers to harvest, graze, and terminate cover crops and maintain eligibility for federal crop insurance on their primary cash crop. The guidelines will help remove roadblocks to cover crop acceptance and improve conservation outcomes.

“These new guidelines are a welcome change for farmers. They will give us greater flexibility to manage for local conditions and evolving knowledge of cover crop management, knowing that our crop insurance eligibility will not be negatively impacted” said Fred Yoder, Ohio farmer and Co-Chair of Solutions from the Land.

The Task Force thanks U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and U.S. Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey for their leadership on this important issue. We also applaud Senators Thune (R-SD), Durbin (D-IL), Ernst (R-IA), Stabenow (D-MI), Fischer (R-NE), Brown (D-OH), Hoeven (R-ND) and Smith (D-MN) who recently [authored a letter](#) supporting the rule.

“Cover crops have been shown to dramatically reduce soil erosion, improve soil health, suppress weeds, and manage moisture,” said Ryan Stockwell, Director of Sustainable Agriculture at the National Wildlife Federation. “These guidelines come at a critical time in the 2019 cover crop growing season. Farmers planting cover crops now can build important soil health on acres that could not be planted due to the wet spring planting season.”

“We are delighted that the new guidelines will provide greater clarity to farmers” said Rob Myers, a University of Missouri agronomist and former Co-Chair of the National Working Group on Cover Crops and Soil Health. “Implementing this important Farm Bill provision so quickly is a testament to USDA’s commitment to customer service to farmers across the country, and their support for cover crops on over 15 million acres across the country.”

The Task Force looks forward to working closely with USDA over the coming months to communicate and implement this important guidance that will strengthen soil health, improve water quality, and reduce risk for American farmers.

Since 2013, the AGree advisors and partners that comprise the Conservation and Crop Insurance Task Force have been working to drive broader adoption of conservation practices through the intersection of conservation and crop insurance. More information about the Task Force can be found [here](#).

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