

MGR-22-002

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Date

February 7, 2022

To

All Approved Insurance Providers

All Risk Management Agency Field Offices

All Other Interested Parties

From

Marcia Bunger, Administrator

Subject

New Relay Cropping Practice Insurable by Written Agreement for Soybeans Seeded into a Small Grain Crop for the 2022 and Succeeding Crop Years

Background

Climate change, soil degradation, and depletion of natural resources are becoming prominent challenges for crop productivity and environmental sustainability in modern agriculture. Producers using conventional farming systems have limited choices available to cope with these issues. RMA has received questions from policyholders and Approved Insurance Providers on whether relay cropping is an insurable practice.

Relay cropping is defined as:

A cropping practice where a second-planted crop (“relay crop”) is planted into an established crop (other than a cover crop) where the crops are planted in a manner that allows separate agronomic maintenance and harvest of the crops unless otherwise defined in the Crop Provisions. Damage to either crop during planting, harvest, or general maintenance of either crop will be considered an uninsurable cause of loss.

Under the relay cropping practice, the first crop is harvested above the immature relay crop which limits damage to the relay crop. The relay crop is harvested later in the growing year during its normal harvest period. In some parts of the country, relay cropping may solve conflicts such as inefficient use of available resources, fertilizer application, and soil degradation. Relay cropping can include a complex suite of different resource-efficient technologies, which possesses the capability to improve soil quality, increase net return, increase overall land productivity, and control weeds and pest infestation.

Policyholders view relay cropping as a tool for crop diversification and environmental sustainability with special focus on soil health and the potential of increasing overall production value on the acreage. This practice is growing in popularity among policyholders utilizing acres to produce two crops for harvest within the same crop year. The most common reported relay cropping practice is planting soybeans into an established winter small grain crop, such as wheat or rye.

Action

For the 2022 and succeeding crop years, RMA will allow soybeans relay cropped into an established small grain crop to be insurable via written agreement. For the purposes of meeting the policy requirements of 9(a)(2)(iii) of the [Common Crop Insurance Policy Basic Provisions](#) (CCIP Basic Provisions), RMA will create a new relay cropping practice and insurance for the practice will only be available via written agreement, as provided in this bulletin.

Written Agreement Requirements:

To insure relay cropped soybeans, the policyholder must submit a request for a written agreement in accordance with Section 18 of the CCIP Basic Provisions and the 2022 Written Agreement Handbook. The written agreement request must:

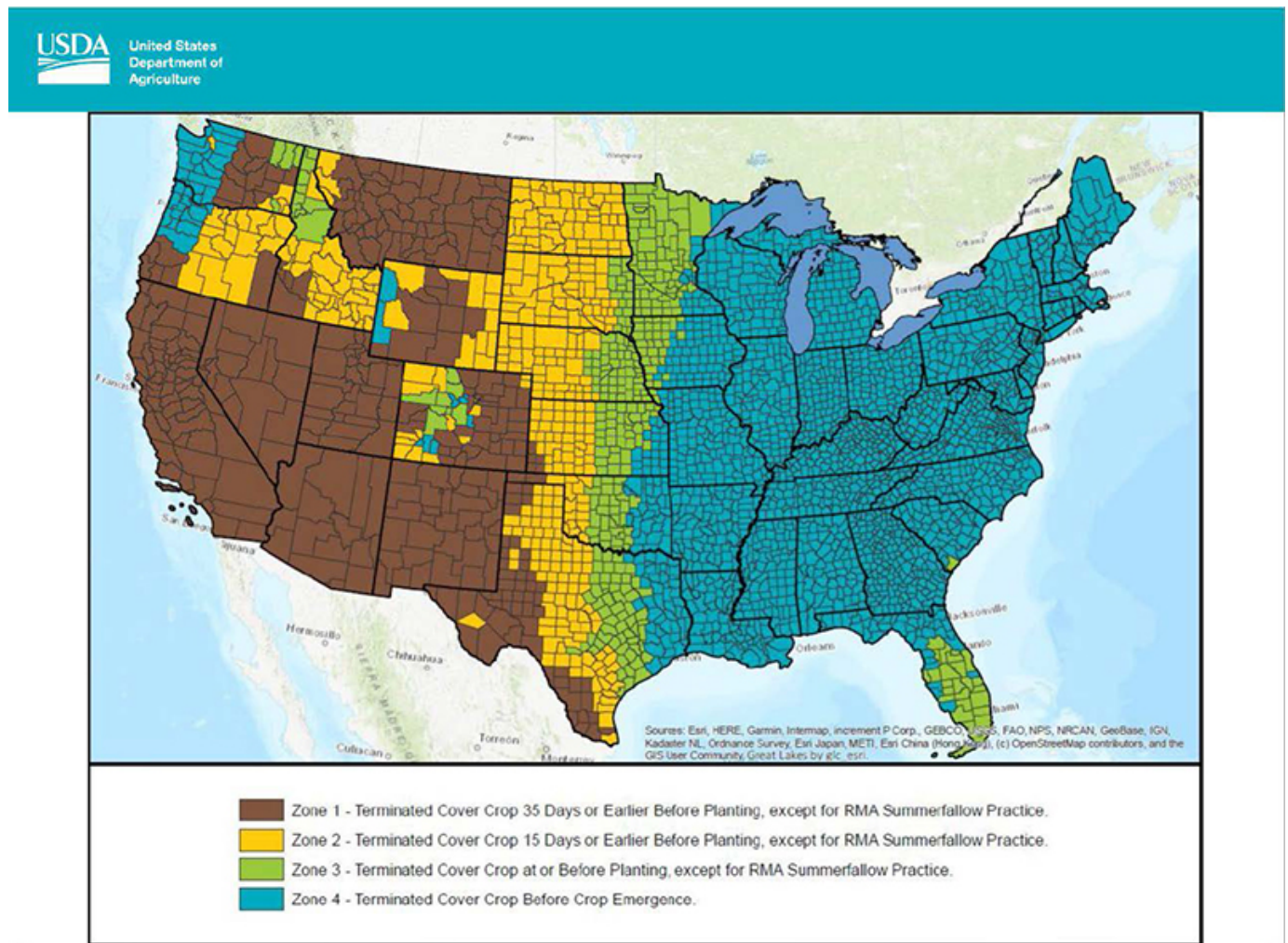
- Be submitted as an unrated practice/type (TP) request type by the acreage reporting date deadline for new requests; and
- Include evidence of adaptability from an agricultural expert that relay cropping is an acceptable practice for the requested location.

In addition, RMA will utilize the zones defined in the [NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines](#) (see map below) to implement separate production requirements. Policyholders requesting a written agreement to insure the relay

cropping practice in a county located in:

- Zones 1, 2, or 3, for a non-irrigated practice, must submit at least the most recent three years of their relay cropping actual production history from the county or area; or
- Zone 4 for a non-irrigated practice or policyholders insuring soybeans under the irrigated practice, requires no prior relay cropping actual production history.

NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines - Zone Guidance Map



Interested producers should contact a crop insurance agent for further information and guidance on how to submit their written agreement request. A list of agents can be found on the RMA website at www.rma.usda.gov/tools-reports/agent-locator. Through the individual written agreement offer, RMA Regional Offices are permitted to exclude soybean special provision statements that restrict the relay cropping practice.