

A-7. Additional Guidance Soil Health & Land Management

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide additional guidance and clarification for farmers and workers at the farm level in determining compliance with the Regenerative Organic Certified ROC™ Framework.

The Soil Health & Land Management module in the ROC Framework seeks to facilitate the adoption of agricultural practices that build, rather than degrade, soils by increasing soil organic matter, biodiversity, and fertility.

Scope and Applicability

This document applies to all ROC applicants and certified operators against the ROC Framework, regardless of product, size, or any other characteristic.

Questions should be directed to qualityassurance@regenorganic.org.

Soil Health & Land Management

2.2 Crop Rotations	
Practice Description	Operations shall demonstrate the use of crop rotations or perennial systems. Annual crop rotations should include green manure. See requirements per level at right.
Additional Guidance	<p>Based on the existent local agriculture environment, operations can adopt intercropping, interseeding, and/or fallow agricultural land practices, where each of these will count as part of a crop rotation sequence.</p> <p>The purpose of a crop rotation is to help manage organic soil fertility and disrupt pests and weed cycles. A crop rotation should be designed to maximize living plant cover and minimize soil disturbance.</p> <p>Crops within the same plant family should be separated in time by a minimum of two years with other crops growing in the field during that time. The more complex and long the rotation, the greater the benefits. Example: Seven-year rotations that include at least three years of herbaceous perennials are ideal for building soil health. Rotations should include cover crops or green manures.</p> <p>The length of a crop rotation could be calculated in the number of years and cash crops harvested for sale or defined fallow period.</p>

	<p>A fallow period practice intends to improve natural resources and the period is managed by the operations based on the existing local agriculture environment. Other forms of fallow, if managed for most of a calendar year, should also be considered part of the crop rotation. Example: If the cover crop or green manure is not harvested for sale and/or is growing for most of a year (e.g., 183 days or more) it should be considered fallow.</p> <p>Intercropping or interseeding practices can be counted as part of a crop rotation sequence. They can be planted simultaneously or not, but at some point, they must be growing together.</p> <p>Exceptions might be granted when operations are unable to meet the above guidelines due to unforeseen factors, such as extreme weather, water scarcity, and others. Documentation is required.</p>
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Terms and Definitions:

Fallow agricultural land refers to arable land, not under cultivation of a crop that is set aside for some time before it is cultivated again. The period is managed by the operations based on the existing local agriculture environment. A fallow period practice intends to improve natural resources such as increasing soil health and fertility, reducing the need for cultivation or weed control, increasing water retention, providing habitat for natural enemies, pollinators, and wildlife, and allowing grazing or pasturing of livestock.

Crop Rotation is the practice of growing different annual crops in a planned or sequence in successive crop years in the same field.

Intercropping or interseeding is the growing of two or more crops within the same field or growing area, simultaneously or at the same time.