

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION GUIDE  
FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT**

511

**511 – STEP 1. INITIAL EVALUATIONS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to determine the landowner's desire to apply forage harvest management to predetermined areas for the intended purpose(s). (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard and Specification).

The landowner must be interviewed to determine the purpose and needs for forage harvest management. Considerations will include the landowner goals and objectives, existing condition and effects of this practice on existing soil, water, air, plant, animal and human resources. A discussion of NRCS forage harvest management standards and specifications should also take place. Role of the landowner and the person assisting with the forage management plan should also be discussed. Additional pertinent questions should be asked on a site-specific basis.

**511 – STEP 2. INVESTIGATIONS, SURVEYS, AND INVENTORIES**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to identify the mandatory preliminary resource inventory and operations that are required before forage harvest management can be planned and implemented. Resource inventories will include all data and information needed to make informed decisions in the development of the forage harvest management plan and any follow-up management needs. Appropriate resource inventories could include soils, forage crops, types of forage, fertility, pests, disease, water resources, harvesting resources, forage storage methods, and all physical features such as fencing, water wells, ditches and irrigation systems etc that might have an effect on planning of forage harvest management.

Adjacent land resources that would be affected by forage harvest management should also be considered. Identify map resources needed such as the proper USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle sheet, soils, and road maps as well as aerial

photography. Also include identifying all needed utility clearances, archeological clearances. Also see Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Practice Job Sheet(s) 511, CPA-52 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION WORKSHEET).

**511 – STEP 3. PRACTICE DESIGN**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to develop a forage harvest management plan. This practice will be applied in accordance with all federal, state and local laws and ordinances. Resource inventories and local conditions will need to be assessed for the proposed land units in the development of a harvest plan. A complete forage harvest plan will be developed with the client that meets the intended goals and objectives. Forage will be harvested at a frequency and height that will maintain a desired healthy plant community. The plan will meet the need of the plant resources by following forage harvest recommendations based on state of maturity, moisture content, length of cut, stubble height and harvest intervals. All appropriate job sheets, maps and reports must be developed with landowners input, review and concurrence. See Practice Standard and Specification 511 and 528, & Job Sheets 511 and 528 6 - 7).

**II. SITING**

The purpose of this step is to insure that the client fully understands which forage treatment units are involved in the forage harvest management plan. Care should be given to make sure the forage treatment units are known by all involved. Access locations for equipment, livestock and vehicles should also be known by all involved in implementing the plan.

**III. MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT**

The purpose of this item is to insure an understanding of the materials/equipment used to implement and monitor forage harvest management. Further knowledge would include the types of harvest equipment, irrigation systems, storage facilities, forage and soil moisture and fertility monitoring equipment.

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Those involved in implementing the forage harvest management plan should also be able to use monitoring equipment such as grass clippers, clipping frames, weight scales, cameras, moisture meters, gypsum blocks, soil quality test kits as well as all other measuring devices needed for monitoring purposes. Appropriate standards, job sheets and expectations that include the types and number of each type of materials/equipment will need to be provided to the landowner and all those involved in the implementation of the plan.

### **511 – STEP 4. PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to document and describe each component of the forage harvest management plan, which includes step by step instructions to be used while carrying out forage harvest management.

This will include the documentation of all components described in Forage Harvest Management Job Sheet 511 and 528 6 and/or 7. Additional reference material should include as needed and appropriate.

The landowner must be provided with a complete forage harvest management plan in the form of NRCS Job sheet 511 and 528 6 and/or 7 in order to document the forage harvest management implementation process. Any items not described in Job Sheet 511 and 528 6 and/or 7 that are essential for implementation forage harvest management will be added to the Job sheet.

### **511 - STEP 5. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION, MAINTENANCE**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to assure the proper management and maintenance is completed

before, during and after forage harvest. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard and Specification 511. This requires a familiarity with soils, forages, agronomy, pests, fertility, harvest equipment, irrigation systems, storage facilities, grazing animals, monitoring and grazing management in order to assure that the forages meet goals and objects and that forages are maintained and/or improve over time. A monitoring program that assesses forages, fertility and irrigation water management should be implemented as per the NRCS National Agronomy Manual. These measures should be discussed with and understood by the landowner.

### **511 – STEP 6. COMPLIANCE OR SPOT CHECKING**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to determine that all work has been completed to the standards required by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All completed NRCS forms should be collected from the landowner and submitted to the appropriate persons. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard and Specification 511 and Job Sheet 511, CPA-52 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION WORKSHEET).

#### **II. DOCUMENTS**

Copies of all completed job sheets and associated work sheets should be submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative within 10 working days of completion of the forage harvest management plan. This includes the Practice Requirements for Forage Harvest Management Job Sheet for 511 and any other job sheets that may be needed for this practice to meet the intended goals and objectives.