**FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT PLAN and IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Forage harvest management is the timely cutting and removal of forages from the field as hay, green chop or ensilage. Forage harvest management is designed to maintain the desired forage species through the utilization of principles that optimize yield and forage quality, and promote vigorous plant regrowth. Timely harvest takes into account the stage of maturity, moisture content, stubble height, and harvest level of the forage. For further information, refer to Conservation Practice Standard 511 – Forage Harvest Management and Forage Harvest Management Guidance Document in the Field Office Technical Guide.

Forage harvest management is applied to accomplish one or more of the following:

* Maintain stand life for the desired time period
* Maintain desired species composition
* Promote vigorous plant growth for improved ground cover and protect the soil from erosion
* Promote soil health improvement provided by healthy vigorous plants that increase soil organic matter, root channels, water-holding capacity, earthworms, etc.
* Provide food and cover for wildlife

**COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES**

Forage Harvest Management is commonly used in conjunction with Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315), Nutrient Management (590) and Integrated Pest Management. Other practices that may be adopted in association with Forage Harvest Management when include Feed Management (592), Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) and Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644) When forages are ensiled, associated practices include Runoff Management System (570) and Waste Storage Facility (313). Prescribed Grazing (528) is used when hayland regrowth is grazed.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M)**

Field should be cleared of debris that could cause damage to machinery to animals if ingested. Operate harvesting equipment at settings and speeds to minimize loss of leaves. Follow manufacturer’s safety measures. To control plant disease and insects and to minimize weed movement clean harvesting equipment after harvest and before storing.

Success is determined by monitoring the quality and quantity of forage and the health and vigor of the hayland plant community. Forage quality should be monitored by testing the crude protein content. Routinely monitor the density and health of the forage stand, using NE-CPA-8a for stand evaluation documentation. Refer Herbaceous Vegetation Establishment Guidance Document and the Forage Harvest Management Guidance Document for guidance in the operation and maintenance of forage stands.

Routine soil testing following Nebraska Extension recommendations is needed to maintain the health of forage stand according to the Nutrient Management Conservation Practice Standard (590). Weed managmeent may be needed to reduce competition from annual or perennial weeds, invasive grasses or brush that affect hay quality and yield. Use pest scouting, appropriate control measures (mechanical, chemical or biological) according to the Integrated Pest Management Conservation Practice Standard (595).

**FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT PLAN (511)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name:  |  | Farm No. |  | Tract No (s): |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Objectives: |  |
|  | Field No. | Acres | Key Forage Species | Cutting No. | Planned Harvest Information1 | Actual Yield and Forage Information | Residual Plant Height at First Frost1,2 |
| Date | Growth Stage | Cutting Height (in) | Quality (% CP) | Yield (tons) | Planned | Actual |
|  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | A weed treatment program and insect and disease will be established when needed. Refer to Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) and Integrated Pest Management (595) Conservation Practice Standards for guidance on preparing a weed treatment and/or integrated pest management plan.  |
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|  | Weed Treatment and Recommendations and Notes |  |
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|  | 1See NE Field Office Technical Guide, Section IV, 511-Forage Harvest Management Guidance Document Table 2. 1, 2A killing frost can be defined as “when temperatures drop below 32 degrees F. for an extended period of time (usually several hours” such that vegetation will be killed by the low temperatures. |
|  |
| I agree to install this practice according to NRCS standards and specifications and the instructions provided on this Jobsheet. |
| Client Signature: |  | Date: |  |
|  |
| This practice is planned according to NRCS standards and specifications. |
| NRCS or TSP Signature: |  | Date: |  |
|  |
| This practice has been completed and maintained in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications. |
| Client Signature: |  | Date: |  |
| NRCS or TSP Signature: |  | Date: |  |