

# Light Disking Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)  
University of Missouri Extension – The School of Natural Resources

<b>For:</b>	<b>County:</b>
<b>Field(s):</b>	<b>Farm #:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tract #:</b>
<b>Designed By:</b>	<b>Contact Information:</b>

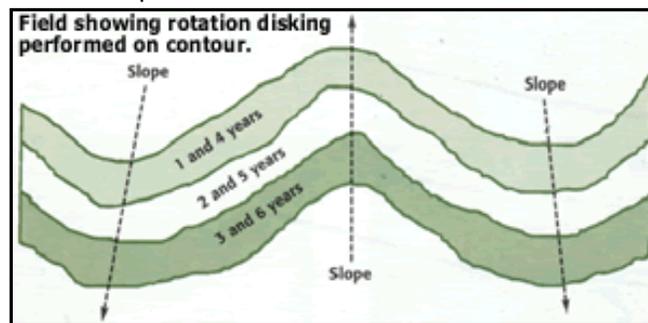
Brood-Rearing Habitat is Important for the Survival of Bobwhite Quail Chicks and many other Grassland Birds

**PURPOSE:** Dense sod or vegetation is detrimental to wildlife feeding and movement and can be improved with a practice know as light disking. Light disking provides more insects and desirable seed at a much lower cost than planting food plots and is an excellent way to enhance grassland habitat for bobwhite quail and other wildlife. Light disking enhances habitat quality by reducing residue, creating bare ground, increasing insect populations, and stimulating growth of desirable seed producing plants. To be effective, complete light disking in grassland habitats next to areas of useable shrubby cover such as covey headquarters, downed tree structures, edge feathering or native shrub thickets.

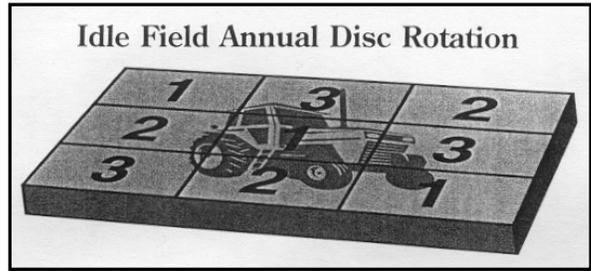


## SPECIFICATIONS:

- Strips should be 25 to 75 feet wide. Strips should be separated from each other by an area of undisturbed vegetation twice as wide as the disked strip. Ideally, one-third of the field should be strip disked annually.
- Disked strips should be as long as possible and should follow the contour of the field to prevent erosion. Avoid disking in areas of concentrated flow or where soil erosion has been a problem.
- The disking should be 2 to 4 inches deep and **expose 30 to 70% bare soil.**
- Disking should be done between July 16<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) light disking dates may differ. Late summer/fall disking tends to favor broadleaves; spring disking tends to favor weedy grasses. Disk before February to get the best response from desirable quail food plants such as ragweed. The disked areas will produce succulent forbs and legumes, which attract insects and produce abundant seed, while the adjacent undisked areas will provide nesting and roosting cover.
- One year later, disk a new strip of similar width in the adjacent undisked area. This will leave another undisked strip of equal width. Disk it one year later. This develops adjacent strips of vegetation of three different ages (see diagram above).
- Wildlife friendly legumes can be overseeded into the disked strips to enhance the benefits of light disking. **DO NOT plant** serecia lepedeza, birdsfoot trefoil, sweetclovers or crownvetch. Refer to JS-BIOL-20, Native Forb and Non-Native Legume Interseeding Job Sheet for specific details on interseeding.



- On flat ground, such as ridgetops and creek bottoms the disk areas can be in 25 to 75 foot- wide blocks, as shown to the right. Disk the number section in the year shown, and repeat the process again in year four.



**MAINTENANCE:**

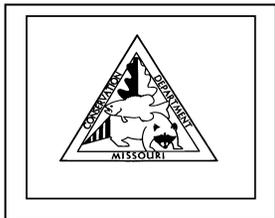
- Maintain the disking rotation.
- Use herbicides to suppress invasive vegetation and to control noxious weeds.

**PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Provide natural cover sources for quail and other grassland wildlife.

Consult with NRCS, MDC, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

Comment:



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