

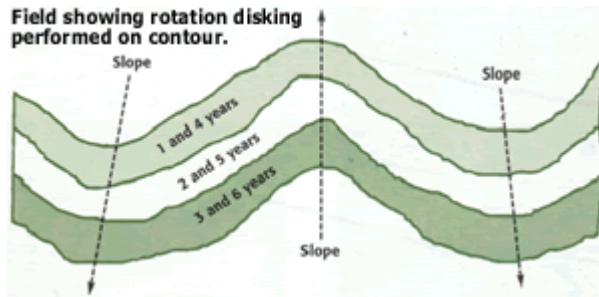
Light Disking

Job Sheet

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

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

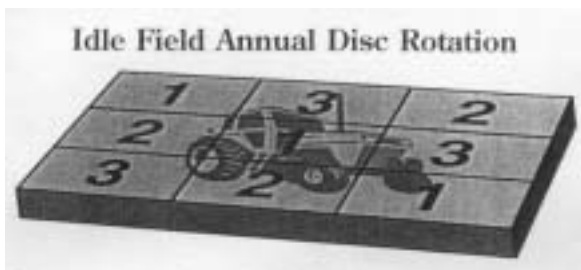
PURPOSE: Dense sod or vegetation is detrimental to wildlife feeding and movement and can be improved by light disking. Light disking provides more insects and desirable seed at a much lower cost than planting food plots and is an excellent way to enhance grassland habitat for bobwhite quail and other wildlife. Light disking enhances habitat quality by releasing sod-bound grasses, reducing residue, creating bare ground, increasing insect populations, and stimulating growth of desirable seed producing plants.



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. Disked strips should be as long as possible and should follow the contour of the field to reduce erosion. The disking should be 2 to 4 inches deep and leave 50 percent residue remaining on the ground surface. Disking should be done between October 1 and December 31. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) light disking dates may differ. 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. Wildlife friendly legumes can be overseeded into the disked



strips to enhance the benefits of light disking. **DO NOT plant** serecia lespedeza, birdsfoot trefoil, sweetclovers or crownvetch.

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 left. 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 or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

COMMENTS

CONTACT:



Date: _____

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