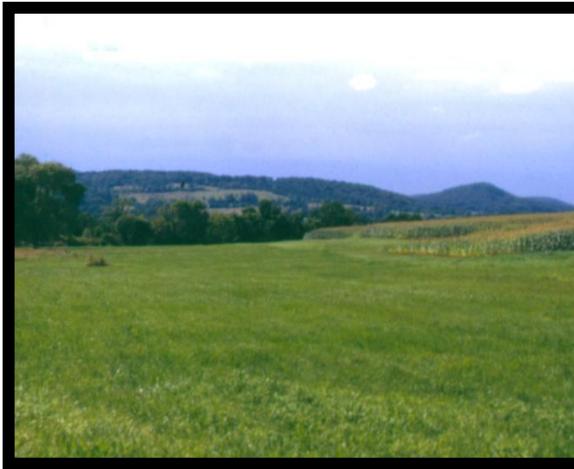




CT Forage Harvest Management - 511 For Perennial Crops

Conservation Practice Job Sheet		<i>Lifespan – 1 year</i>	
Producer:		Location:	
Farm, Tract and Field(s):		Planner:	
Program:		Date:	



Definition

The timely cutting and removal of forages from the field as hay, green-chop, or ensilage.

annually planted and harvested food, fiber, or oilseed crops.

Purpose

This practice is commonly used for one or more of the following purposes:

1. Optimize yield and quality of forage at the desired levels
2. Promote vigorous plant re-growth
3. Manage for the desired species composition
4. Use forage plant biomass as a soil nutrient uptake tool
5. Control insects, diseases and weeds
6. Maintain and/or improve wildlife habitat

Resource Management System

A Resource Management system is a combination of conservation practices and resource management, for the treatment of all identified resource concerns for soil, water, air, plants, and animals, within a conservation management or planning unit that meets or exceeds the quality criteria in the Field Office Technical Guide for resource sustainability. Forage Harvest Management is applied as part of Conservation Management Systems for crop, hay, and pasture lands. Forage Harvest Management is often planned as part of Conservation Crop Rotations (328), Stripcropping (585), and Prescribed Grazing Systems (528). The practices associated with Forage Harvest Management will vary by land use, but may include: Nutrient Management

Where Used

This practice applies to all land uses where machine harvested forage crops are grown. This practice job sheet does not apply to

(590), Waste Recycling (633), Brush Management (314), Forage and Biomass Planting (512), Prescribed Grazing (528), Upland Wildlife Management (645), and Herbaceous Weed Control (315).

Criteria, Considerations, and Specifications

The Criteria, Considerations, and Specifications for this practice shall be in concurrence with CT Field Office Technical Guide and follow the CT Conservation Practice Standard for Forage Harvest Management, Practice Code 511.

Additional Wildlife Management Considerations

Hay fields are an important habitat for ground nesting birds. When ground nesting birds are spotted in the fields, the following management alternatives are recommended:

- Leave a 20 foot wide unmowed field border to provide nesting habitat. Borders may be mowed after August 1st.
- Avoid areas where ground-nesting birds are frequently seen, or leave small patches such as edges or strips unmowed as nesting areas.
- Raise mower blades to six inches or more (may prevent the destruction of some nests and young in the early mowing season).
- Do not mow at night.
- Use flushing bars on haying equipment to move birds hiding in the grass.

Soil Fertility

A soil test should be performed about every three years to monitor soil pH and fertility levels. Samples can be collected any time of the year that the ground is not frozen. Soil tests samples should be sent to an appropriate soil testing lab, such as the University of Connecticut Soil Nutrient Analysis Laboratory. Follow soil test result recommendations for maintenance fertilizer applications and make adjustments for realistic yields.

Certification

Producer should communicate with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) prior to and during implementation activities. The following information should be used for documentation:

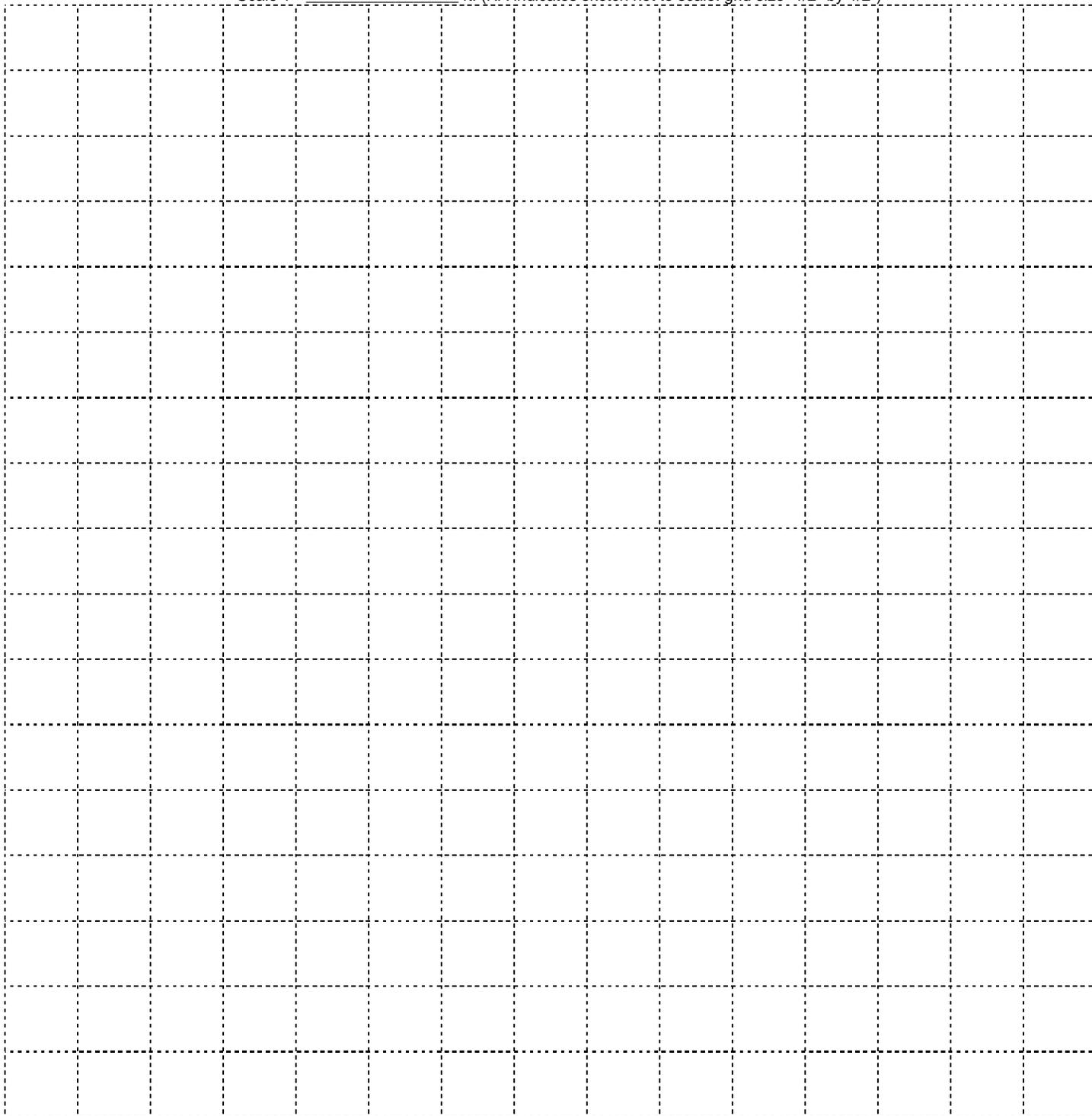
Documentation by NRCS staff of proper management or producer's Forage Harvesting Records.

Forage Harvest Management – Plan View

Landowner _____

Tract & Field No. _____

Scale 1"= _____ ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size=1/2" by 1/2")



Forage Harvest Management Plan

Participant:		Dominant Forage Species:	
Planner:		Tract & Field(s)	
Intended Use:			
Objective(s):			

Specifications:

Field(s)	Acres	Expected Number of Cuttings & Harvest Interval	Expected Yields (Tons or Bales/Ac.)	Length to Cut (for silage only)	Planned Stubble Height (inches)	Cutting and Harvest Methods	Planned Moisture Content

Additional Specifications and Notes (Fact Sheets and other guidance documents provided should be listed here):

Operation and Maintenance:

- Before forage harvest, clear fields of debris that could damage machinery or if ingested by livestock, lead to sickness or death.
- Monitor weather conditions and take action accordingly before and after cutting to optimize forage wilting or curing time to preserve feed quality and prevent forage swaths or windrows from smothering underlying plants.
- Operate all forage harvesting equipment at the optimum settings and speeds to minimize loss of leaves.
- Apply lime and fertilizer according to soil test results. A soil test should be performed about every three years to monitor soil pH and fertility levels.
- To control forage plant diseases, insects, and movement of weeds, clean harvesting equipment prior to moving to another field, and after harvest and before storing.
- Set shear-plate on forage chopper to the proper theoretical cut for the crop being harvested. Inspect and repair harvesting equipment following manufacturer's preventative maintenance procedures.
- Keep knives well sharpened. Do not use re-cutters or screens unless forage moisture levels fall below recommended levels for optimum chopping action.
- Follow all agricultural equipment manufacturers' safety measures when operating forage harvesting equipment.
- Dispose of the plastic wrap or bags used to store forage in an environmentally sound manner.
- All shields shall be in place during machine operation to prevent injury or death. Shut off machinery before working on or unplugging moving parts.
- For silage/haylage storage, ensure good compaction and an airtight seal to exclude oxygen and mold or bacterial formations.
- If stored as baled hay, ensure proper dryness to avoid spontaneous combustion, and/or mold.

Note: Any changes to this plan must be approved by the NRCS representative managing the project.

Concurrence of Participant:	
_____	_____
Participant	Date

Plan Certification:	
_____	_____
NRCS	Date

Forage Harvesting Records

Name: _____ Tract: _____ Field (s): _____

Cutting Date	Field(s)	Acres Harvested	Tons or Bales/Acre	Stubble Height (in.)	Moisture Content (%)	Field Notes/Comments

Practice Certification Statement:		
I have inspected the implementation of this practice and certify that it has been implemented according to the practice standard and the specifications in this job sheet.		
Certified by:	Title:	Date

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-2791. To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.