

# FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT

## PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service - practice code 511



### FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT

The cutting and removal of forages from the field as hay, greenchop, or ensilage.

### PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice applies to all land uses where machine harvested forage crops are grown. It is designed to help the farmer or rancher optimize the economic yield of forage at the desired quality and quantity. In addition, the practice provides the following functions:

1. Promote vigorous plant growth for improved ground cover and protection from erosion
2. Soil improvement provided by healthy vigorous plants that increase soil organic matter, root channels, water holding capacity, earth worms, etc
3. Maintain stand life for the desired time period
4. Maintain desired species composition

5. Use forage plants as a nutrient uptake tool to utilize or reduce excess plant nutrients available in the soil
  6. Provide food and cover for wildlife
- The following management concepts are considered in the specifications of this practice:
1. Stage of maturity and harvest interval
  2. Moisture content for cutting silage/haylage as well as baling as hay
  3. Length of cut for silage/haylage
  4. Stubble height maintained for plant health and vigor
  5. Management considerations that help improve wildlife food and cover
  6. Additional considerations needed to help control disease, insects, and weed infestations

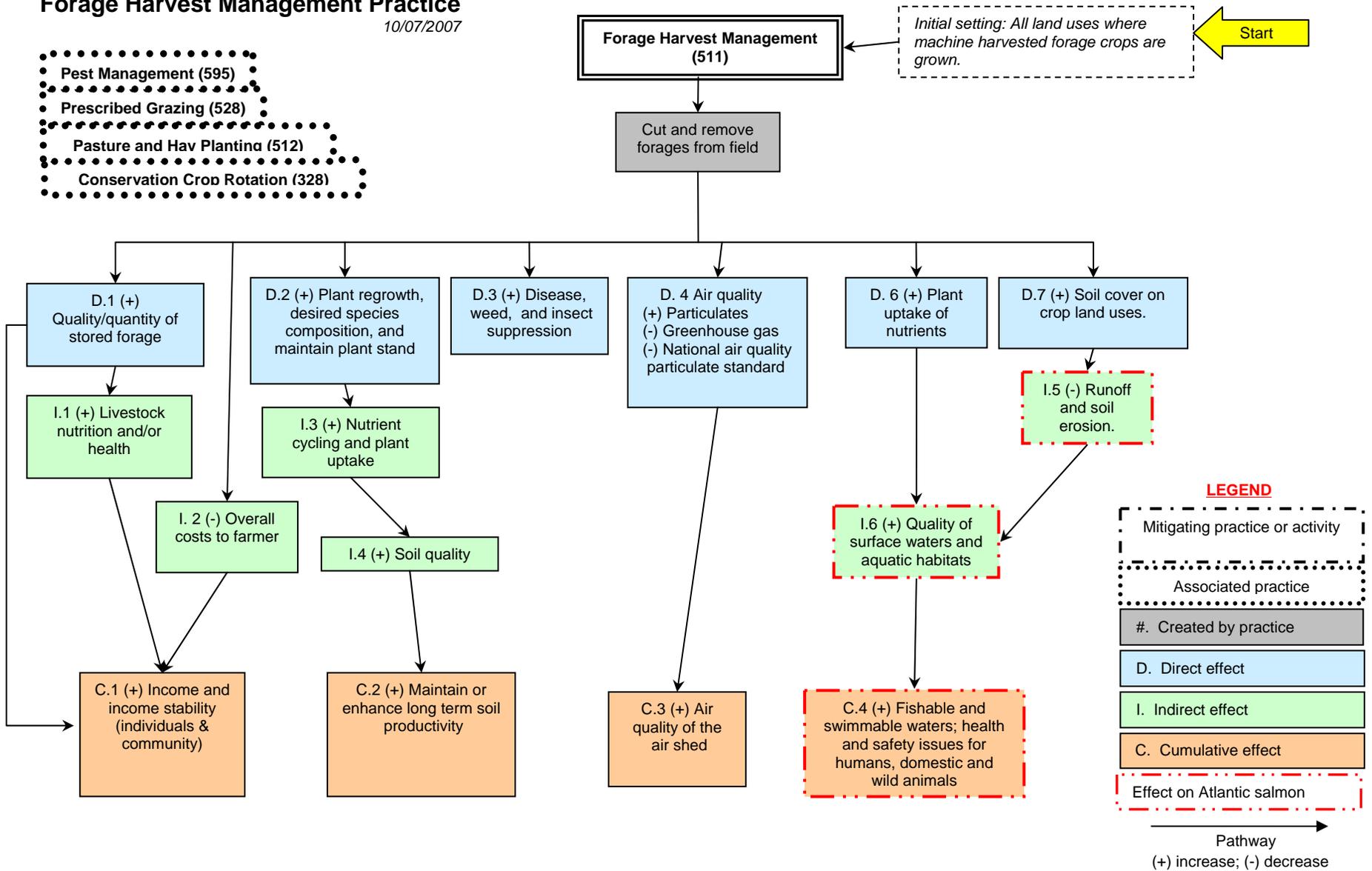
Additional information including standards and specifications are on file in the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guide.

The following pages contain the conservation effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.

# Forage Harvest Management Practice

10/07/2007

- Pest Management (595)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Pasture and Hay Planting (512)
- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)



The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.