

## **Missouri Cropland Community WHAG Model Instructions**

### **Cropland:**

#### **(1) Wildlife Friendly Field Border:**

- For existing borders, to qualify as wildlife friendly 60% of the canopy will be dominated by herbaceous species having a good or excellent wildlife rating (see Table 2, 327 Conservation Cover Std.). Existing borders containing more than 25% herbaceous species rated poor, dominated by herbaceous species rated fair, or dominated by tree canopy coverage will score zero points.
- New borders will be seeded according to guidelines spelled out for Permanent Vegetative Cover Development in the 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat standard. No species rated poor will be included in any new seeding.
- Consider the timing of haying/mowing operations when scoring this category. For example, a border comprised of a good wildlife-friendly mix around the entire field will score zero points if it is all mowed between April 1 through July 15.

#### **(2) Crop Field Management:**

- Base estimates on expected stubble remaining prior to spring.
- In general, grazing or chopping residues should result in a lower score. For example, a field with no fall tillage would typically score 9 points. That same field with residues mowed in the fall would score 6 points—recognizing the decline in habitat quality.

#### **(3) Food Value:**

- Food plot or unharvested grain strips must be a minimum of 30' in width. For fields in excess of 80 acres will require the food plot/unharvested grain to be left in two or more separated locations. For example, a 100 acre field wouldn't get credit if the unharvested grain is concentrated in one corner.
- Leave food plots/unharvested grain next to quality cover. Quality cover is defined as wildlife friendly field borders described above or quality shrubby cover as defined in the new quail WHAG.
- No pro-rating is allowed. To score 4 points, the landowner would be required to leave a minimum of 0.5 acres unharvested grain in a 50 acre crop field (0.25 for each 1 - 40 acres).

#### **(4) Crop Rotation:**

- To score 5 points, rotations will include at least three different crops, with at least 1 year of small grains/winter cover crop/meadow out of 4. Small grain is defined as oats, wheat, rye or barley.
- A soybeans-wheat rotation will score 3 points.
- To score 3 points, rotations including cotton must include a winter cover at least 3 out of every 5 years cotton is used. Rotations using cotton without a winter cover crop scores zero.

(5) Field Size:

- For the first part of this question, measure to any woody cover, including single tree lines, grazed timber, etc. You may use the openland category on sites where we know of prairie chickens or other T&E grassland birds, otherwise use edge.
- When completing this form in the office, assume dense woody cover is present in woody draws/fencelines in excess of 30' in width, ungrazed woodland, or where you have personal knowledge that 0.1 acre of dense woody cover is present.

Bonus Dense Woody Cover Points

- Measure the amount of the field within 660' of dense woody cover (refer to the definition and size requirement on the Cropland WHAG form).

When completing the index, remember to divide by 40. It is possible to have an index score greater than 1.0 for the Cropland Community model.