



Strip disking is an efficient and cost-effective vegetation management tool. Implementation of this management technique within old fields or areas established to grass at least 3 years old should significantly enhance bobwhite habitat. Many other wildlife species using grassland/early successional habitat will also benefit from this practice. Lightly disking in strips on a 2-3 year cycle will enhance habitat quality in a number of ways, including reducing litter accumulation, creating bare ground, stimulating germination of desirable seed-producing plants, setting back succession of woody vegetation, and increasing insect populations. Strip disking will maintain nesting cover and produce adjacent brood habitat. The best time to disk is from late winter to early spring, prior to the beginning of the reproduction season of most wildlife species or late fall after nesting season. For the best diversity of plants, timing of disking should be varied each year. For example, late fall disking will encourage different plants than late winter or early spring disking. This practice can be rotated with burning to get an even better diversity of desirable plants. Fertilizer (0-20-20) may be applied to improve production of legumes on disked areas.

Two Year Rotation Example:

Divide each field into adjacent plots, with each plot containing 2 strips of land 30 to 50 feet in width, resulting in each plot being 60 to 100 feet wide. In fall or spring of the first year, within each plot, disk the first strip of land and leave the second strip "undisked." In fall or spring of the second year, within each plot, disk the second strip and protect the first strip disked the previous year. In fall or spring of the third year, within each plot, disk the first strip disked during year 1, protecting the strip disked in year 2. Continue this rotation treatment, disking strips every other year.

Three Year Rotation Example:

Divide each field into adjacent plots, with each plot containing 3 strips of land 30 to 50 feet in width, resulting in each plot being 90 to 150 feet wide. In fall or spring of the first year, within each plot, disk the first strip of land and leave the second and third strip "undisked." In fall or spring of the second year, within each plot, disk the second strip and protect the first (disked during previous year) and third strip. In fall or spring of the third year, within each plot, disk the third strip and protect the first (disked during year 1) and second (disked during year 2) strips. In the fall or spring of the fourth year, within each plot, disk the first strip (disked in year 1) and protect the second (disked during year 2) and third (disked during year 3) strips. Continue this rotation treatment, disking strips every third year.

**Highly Erodible Fields**

1. Strips shall be disked light enough to provide for a minimum of 30 percent residue on the soil surface after disking operations are complete. Disking should be done on the least erosive parts of fields and not in places where gully formation is a problem.
2. For fields with an EI of 8 or greater, a disked strip must be no wider than 30 feet. The minimum width between disked strips is 60 feet, and no more than 33.3% of the total field may be disked in one year. Light disking should be performed on a 2-3 year cycle. Rotate and/or alternate the location of the lightly disked strips each year. Continue this rotation, disking strips every 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> year. When disked area is rotated, the old area should have sufficient permanent cover to provide wildlife habitat and soil loss protection.
3. Strips shall be disked along field contours as near as practical.
4. Strips may be disked from late October through late March. Strips disked in late fall may be seeded to a winter cover crop suited for wildlife.

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