



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

CSP Job Sheet H-3

HABITAT MANAGEMENT ENHANCEMENT

February 2006

NEBRASKA

Name: _____

Unharvested alfalfa buffers in preferred locations – (10% of field)

Payment = \$5.00 / acre / year for all cropland meeting specifications noted below. Payment is made during each year of the contract – not just during years when alfalfa is present, when alfalfa is used in a crop rotation at least 50 percent of the time (refer to required elements below). All acres within the field are eligible for payment – not just the acres left unharvested.

The intent of this enhancement is to provide secure nesting areas for various bird species (game and non-game) that are attracted to alfalfa fields and rely on taller, undisturbed vegetation during the spring and summer. Other wildlife benefits include providing suitable brood-rearing, hiding, feeding/pollination, and winter cover for many different wildlife species. Alfalfa fields provide ideal nesting habitat for ring-necked pheasant and other upland game birds. However, nest success is often limited by haying operations which coincide with the peak of the nesting season. Nest sites are typically concentrated in the outer perimeter of a field or adjacent to other habitat types. If adequate cover exists, these areas can also serve as high-quality brood-rearing habitat following the hatching period.

Required Elements:

- Cropland acres where alfalfa or other perennial legumes are used in a crop rotation at least 50% of the time (e.g. 5 years of alfalfa followed by 5 years of row crops) or acres that are currently established to perennial legumes are eligible.
- A minimum of 10% (not less than one acre) of the acreage used for alfalfa hay production must be set-aside and remain unharvested through the duration of the growing season until March 31st of the following year.
- All areas must be 30 feet wide or greater to meet the requirements of this enhancement.
- Preferred locations within the field include the outer perimeter as well as areas adjacent to streams, wetlands, wooded draws, etc. and corridors between these habitat types.

Documentation Required:

Complete Table 1 which documents the tracts and fields which are eligible to receive the Unharvested Alfalfa Buffers enhancement payment and will be managed according to the specifications outlined above. On an annual basis, complete Table 2 which documents the actual conditions on those tracts and fields during the current crop year. Examples are provided on the first two lines for assistance.

