



WILDLIFE FOOD PLOT CRP Practice Job Sheet CP12

Ohio - Natural Resources Conservation Service

August 2010

Description

The purpose of this practice is to establish annual or perennial wildlife food plots that will enhance wildlife habitat. Food plots add plant diversity, food and cover to the landscape. They are particularly useful where winter food supplies for a variety of wildlife are not adequately supplied by existing cover or land uses.

Practice Requirements

This practice may be used in conjunction with the following practices: CP1, CP2, CP3, CP3A, CP4D, CP10 and CP11.

Vegetation shall be established in accordance with Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) practice in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

The species and rates shall be adapted to the soil and climatic conditions of the site and suitable for the practice purposes. In addition, species used will meet the requirements of the CRP practice.

The required CRP practice cover shall be established, maintained and managed for a period of not less than 10 years. All provisions of the CRP-1 contract Appendix will be followed for the life of the contract.

Up to 10% of a field may be established to a food plot; individual food plots may exceed 5 acres and may not be immediately adjacent. Food plots must be separated by a sufficient distance to maximize wildlife benefits.

Food plots may be maintained at one location throughout the life of the CRP-1 or may be relocated each year.

If sludge, manure or other agricultural by-products are to be applied to the CRP acreage, contact FSA. At a minimum, these actions will require approval by the



FSA County Committee and the development of a Waste Utilization plan by NRCS or TSP.

The cover shall be maintained for the life of the contract. Disturbance or alteration of the cover is allowed only if it is included in the conservation plan and authorized by the FSA County Committee.

The seeded area shall not be harvested or grazed by domestic livestock for the life of the contract.

The cover shall be seeded within 12 months after the CRP-1 contract effective date. If more time is needed to accomplish the seeding, an extension must be granted by the FSA County Committee.

In accordance with the Ohio FSA State Policy regarding quality of seed, all seed used on CRP contracts must be purchased from a registered Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) seed vendor and shall comply with all other provisions of this policy which is provided to the participant by the FSA County Office prior to contract approval.

The participant is responsible for certifying to FSA when cover has been established.

Establishment

Location

When selecting locations of food plots, keep the following considerations in mind:

- locate adjacent to good quality cover such as field borders, dense grass stands, wetlands, brushy fencerows, windbreaks or wooded areas; this allows wildlife to better use the food plot without exposure to predators
- locate on the windward side (generally north and west) of the winter cover to prevent them from accumulating deep snow
- should be on the least erodible part of the field, if possible; well-drained soils will produce the most food
- long narrow (30-50 feet wide) and small (0.25 - 0.5 acre) areas interspersed through the area are preferred over large food plots
- food plots may be maintained in one location or moved and re-established every year or two

Site Preparation and Planting

Cover provided must control erosion within acceptable limits; use no-till, reduced tillage or contours as needed.

Plow or disk if needed to establish a seedbed. If needed, fertilize at 50-75% of the recommended rate for the selected species; add lime only if pH is very low.

Drill or plant into firm seedbed or broadcast over established seed bed with light discing or cultipacking.

Establish the food plot early enough that the grain will be available for wildlife use by winter. Generally, this means seeding between May 1 and June 15, depending on the species in the mix.

Species seeded shall be suited to the soil and climatic conditions of the site; seed species that are favored by targeted wildlife. Grain type food plots only are allowed under CRP. Pure stands may produce more food, but mixed stands will attract a greater variety of wildlife. Do not seed too thickly. Seed the species listed on the specifications sheet; seed at rates and according to methods described on the specifications sheet.

Maintenance after Establishment

Maintain the cover to provide adequate erosion control, comply with noxious weed laws and control undesirable plants species, insects or rodents that negatively affect the CRP cover or adjacent lands.

Weed control shall be the minimum necessary to control excessive competition or significant noxious weed presence; allow desirable species such as barnyard grass, common ragweed, foxtail or lambs quarters which provide additional seed and cover.

Protect from livestock grazing, fire, mowing or herbicide application which would diminish food value.

Food plots may be maintained in one spot or rotated around the area; if rotated, requirements for establishment and location must be followed for each newly established plot. If plots are moved or discontinued, establish cover adequate to control erosion and provide wildlife benefits on discontinued plots.

Food plots may remain undisturbed for two winters if enough grain and weed seeds are available the second winter.

If multiple plots are used, allow alternate plantings between the plots each year; single plots may have alternating halves, with half planted each year while the remainder grows to annual weeds.

Spot treatment necessary to control noxious weeds or pests that will damage the CRP cover may be allowed during the primary nesting season (March 1 to July 15) if: it is limited to the affected area of the field; the method used shall be the least damaging to nesting wildlife and habitat; and it is approved beforehand by the FSA County Committee.

Mid-Contract Management

Typically, activities to improve the cover for wildlife are required during the life of the CRP contract. However, since food plots will be disturbed and re-established every 1-2 years, mid-contract management activities typically are not necessary on food plots.

Recommended Species

Species	Seeding Rate	Wildlife Uses	Planting Date	Availability
Corn, sorghum	8-10 lbs./ac.	pheasants, quail, doves, turkey, grouse, songbirds, rabbits, deer, squirrels	April 15 - June 1	fall and winter
Millets	8-10 lbs./ac.	Waterfowl, doves, songbirds	April 15 - June 1	fall
Buckwheat	25-30 lbs./ac.	waterfowl, pheasants, quail, dove, grouse, deer	June 1 – August 1	summer and fall until first frost
Sunflowers	5-8 lbs./ac.	pheasants, dove, waterfowl, songbirds	May 1 – July 1	fall and winter
Soybeans	30-40 lbs./ac.	pheasants, dove, deer	May 15 – June 15	fall

These rates are given as pure stands; they should be reduced accordingly for mixed stands. These rates are based on drilling/planting; they should be increased 25% for broadcast seedings. If a pre-mixed food plot seed mix is used, seed according to instructions provided with the mix.

CP12 WILDLIFE FOOD PLOT SPECIFICATIONS SHEET

For:	Farm #:
Field(s):	Tract #:
Planned By:	Date:

SEED MIX

Acres to be seeded:	
Recommended Species and Seeding Rates	
Species	Rate (lb./ac)
Total (lbs./acres)	

ESTABLISHMENT

<input type="checkbox"/> Herbicide: Per OSU Extension, professional consultant and/or label recommendations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Tillage:
<input type="checkbox"/> Fertilizer/Lime:
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
PLANTING METHOD: DATE
NOTES:

SIGNATURES

NRCS Representative	Date	FSA Representative	Date
I understand the plan and specifications and agree to perform this practice accordingly.			
Participant	Date		