



# CRP Required Management Practice: Mowing

Landowner: \_\_\_\_\_

Tract: \_\_\_\_\_

## CRP CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is responsible for administering the rules of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). All questions related to CRP contract requirements, payments, or modifications should be directed to the FSA office where your contract originated.

CRP policy requires participants to do some type of "disturbance" to certain CRP practices during specific years of the contract. This job sheet describes how to implement mowing as a required management activity.

## PURPOSE

Once established, grassland fields need to be managed so that the grasses do not crowd out the forbs and/or legumes over time. In the absence of disturbance, the composition of grassland communities will change over several years through normal plant succession. The vegetative structure changes as annual forbs and legumes are replaced by perennial forbs, grasses, and eventually, woody plants. Structural changes also occur as litter accumulates and vegetation density increases. These changes may lead to a decline in diversity and reduced wildlife habitat benefits.

The purpose of required contract management activities is to enhance the wildlife habitat value of the enrolled acres by encouraging a diverse forb and legume community. Forbs and legumes in grasslands are beneficial to birds, pollinators, butterflies, and other wildlife.

## MOWING

This CRP required management practice increases wildlife habitat quality by inhibiting woody plant

growth, reducing plant residue, and increasing sunlight penetration to the ground surface.

**NOTE:** CRP rules do not allow disturbance of cover during the primary nesting season. This rule prevents injury to nesting and fledgling birds. The primary nesting season in Wisconsin is **May 15 through August 1**. Spot clipping or whole field mowing may be done during the primary nesting season with prior approval from the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee.

## SPECIFICATIONS

The following specifications must be met for the required management mowing practice on CRP acreage:

- » Evaluate the proposed site to determine the objective of the mowing activity.
- » Mow areas prior to seed development.
- » Operate equipment to ensure a uniform distribution of mowed plant material across the field surface.
- » For native grasses and forbs, field(s) will be mowed once between Sept 1 – Nov 15 with a minimum mow height of 7 inches.
- » For introduced grasses and legumes, field(s) will be mowed once between Mar 15 – May 14 OR Aug 2 – Sept 1 with a minimum mow height of 4 inches.
- » The field(s) must be mowed one time for each year(s) specified in the job sheet. See Table 1 for scheduled dates.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

The following considerations shall be evaluated when developing mowing recommendations:

- » Use discretion when soil conditions are wet to avoid compaction and damage to sod.
- » Control of noxious weeds may require herbicide application in addition to mowing. Seek prior approval from FSA.
- » Clean mowing equipment prior to moving out of fields with known noxious weeds or invasive plant species to avoid spreading seed.
- » For the control of noxious, invasive, and nuisance weeds, review the NRCS Job Sheet 397, Conservation Cover Maintenance.

**Table 1.** Scheduled Dates for Mowing

<b>INTRODUCED GRASSES/LEGUMES (NO SMOOTH BROMEGRASS)</b>			
Mow field(s) one time from:		March 15th to May 14th or August 2nd to September 1st	
<b>Field Number(s)</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>

<b>INTRODUCED GRASSES/LEGUMES (WITH SMOOTH BROMEGRASS)</b>		
Mow field(s) one time from:		August 2nd to September 1st
<b>Field Number(s)</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Year</b>

<b>NATIVE GRASSES/FORBS</b>		
Mow field(s) one time from:		September 1st to November 15th
<b>Field Number(s)</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Year</b>