



## ***CRP Required Management Practice:***

### **Herbicide Application and Interseeding for Introduced Cool Season Grass Cover**

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, payment, or modifications should be directed to the FSA office where your contract originated.

CRP policy requires participants to do some type of “controlled disturbance” to introduced cool season grass CRP cover during specific years of the contract. This job sheet describes how to implement the Herbicide Application and Interseeding for Introduced Cool Season Grass Cover as a CRP required management activity.

Once established, grassland fields need to be managed to prevent grasses from crowding out the 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 of the cover changes as legumes are replaced by perennial grasses, and if not controlled, eventually woody plants. These changes may lead to a decline in plant diversity and reduced wildlife benefits.

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

#### **PRIMARY NESTING SEASON**

CRP rules do not allow disturbance of cover during the primary nesting season. This rule prevents injury to nesting and fledgling birds.

The current primary nesting season for new CRP contracts in Wisconsin is May 15 through August 1. CRP participants are required to control invasive and weed plant species before they produce viable seed. Spot clipping or spot spraying may be done during the primary nesting season with prior approval from the local FSA County Committee.

#### **HERBICIDE APPLICATION AND INTERSEEDING**

Use of this required management practice is limited to the following introduced cool season CRP cover types: CP1, CP21, CP23, CP23A, and CP28 only.

This CRP required management practice increases wildlife habitat value by suppressing grasses, inhibiting woody plant growth, reducing the accumulation of plant residue, and increasing sunlight penetration to the ground. The controlled disturbance of the existing cover will increase the survival of interseeded legumes and stimulate their natural regeneration.

#### **Site Preparation Alternatives**

Site preparation is required prior to herbicide application and interseeding where the existing vegetation is extremely thick, tall, or a heavy accumulation of plant residues are present. Site preparation exposes targeted weed species to allow uniform herbicide contact with the plant.

**Note:** The options of using haying or managed grazing for site preparation must follow all CRP contract requirements. These two options may only be done once in a three-year period and will result in a reduced CRP payment for any year that this activity occurs.

Only one of the following site preparations may be done for each CRP field:

- **Grazing** shall be based upon a plan developed in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 528, Prescribed Grazing. Job Sheet 147 may be used for this purpose. Grazing can only be done with prior approval by the FSA County Committee. The target post grazing height for the CRP cover shall be 4 inches.

**Note:** CRP rules require managed grazing to occur between August 2 and September 30.

- **Haying** may be done to physically remove plant material from CRP land for site preparation. Haying can only be done with prior approval from the FSA County Committee. Haying shall be carried out according to NRCS Job Sheet 146, CRP Managed Haying. The hay cutting equipment shall be operated to achieve a post harvest plant height of 4 inches.

If site conditions prevent uniformly harvesting to this height other site preparation options should be considered.

**Note:** CRP rules require haying to occur between August 2 and September 15.

- **Mowing** must be done in accordance with Wisconsin Job Sheet 383, CRP Required Management Practice - Mowing. Plan the timing and type of mowing equipment utilized to achieve a post mowing height of 4-inches and to uniformly distribute the mowed plant material over the field.
- **Prescribed Burning** shall be in accordance with a NRCS approved written burn plan developed to satisfy the requirements of the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 338, Prescribed Burning.  
**Note:** The landowner and/or the individual igniting the fire are liable for any damages or emergency response fees resulting from the prescribed burn.

## **Herbicide Selection and Application**

- Evaluate the proposed site to determine the objective of the herbicide application. Identify the plants targeted for suppression and any beneficial plants that could be harmed by the herbicide application.
- Follow herbicide recommendations from industry professionals to select the herbicide product, application method, application rate, and timing. All herbicide applications must follow label requirements. Failure to follow herbicide label requirements within the timeframe outlined in this job sheet could cause significant damage to the CRP cover.

## **Interseeding Legumes**

- Select the legume type to interseed (Table 2: Legume Interseeding Rates) based on the soil moisture regime and soil pH conditions of the CRP field.
- To plant the legume seed use a no-till drill that is properly equipped and set up to operate in the cover conditions on the site. The drill must be accurately calibrated to achieve the planned per acre seeding rate.
- Consider the growth habits of known weed competition when developing a planting plan. Late summer establishment of legumes after site preparation and herbicide application may provide an advantage over aggressive weeds such as thistles.

## **SPECIFICATIONS**

**CAUTION: This practice may have an extremely negative impact on vegetative cover if not implemented correctly. The CRP contract holder is ultimately responsible for complying with the terms of the contract, including maintaining the appropriate vegetative cover.**

- Herbicide application restriction areas and environmentally sensitive areas; including but not limited to concentrated flow areas, potentially erosive areas, and areas within 20 feet of surface water, shall be identified on the conservation plan map.

- Only tested legume seed shall be planted. The planting rate shall be adjusted to reflect the actual amount of Pure Live Seed (PLS) required.
- Legume seed shall be properly stored. Inoculation is required prior to planting.
- Seeding equipment shall be calibrated to ensure seed placement and soil/seed contact are suitable for consistent germination.
- Utilize the planting periods in Table 1 to develop the planting plan.

**Table 1:** *Legume Interseeding Planting Periods*

Spring Interseeding	Summer Interseeding	Dormant Interseeding
April 1 – May 14	August 2 – August 29	October 8 – Freeze-up

**Note:** Summer seeding is generally riskier than spring seeding due to dry conditions. Planting at either end of a recommended range is riskier than the middle of the range.

**Table 2:** *Legume Interseeding Rates*

Mix A: Dry Site	Lbs. PLS/ac.	Mix B: Mesic or Wet Site	Lbs. PLS/ac.
Alfalfa	6.0	Red Clover	5.0
Alsike Clover	1.5	Ladino Clover	1.5

**Note:** These mixes are for use with the following introduced cool season CRP cover types: CP1, CP21, CP23, CP23A, and CP28 only.

## CONSIDERATIONS

- Use discretion when soil conditions are wet to avoid soil compaction and damage to the existing CRP cover.
- Clean equipment prior to moving out of fields to prevent the spread of undesirable seeds.
- Be aware of herbicide residue effects on new seedings.
- If noxious weeds have gone to seed, control by spot spraying in addition to prior hand clipping and bagging of seed heads. This will reduce the potential spread of these species.
- For the control of noxious, invasive, and nuisance weeds, review the NRCS Job Sheet 397, Conservation Cover Maintenance.

## SITE PREPARATION PRIOR TO HERBICIDE APPLICATION FOR EACH FIELD

CRP Field Number(s)	Method of Site Preparation Selected	Year Site Preparation Will Occur	Other Comments

### SPRAYING AND INTERSEEDING PLAN

CRP Field Number(s)	Targeted Plant(s) to Suppress	Year Spraying Will Occur	Time-frame Interseeding Will Occur	Other Concerns

**Notes:**

### LEGUME INTERSEEDING BY FIELD

CRP Field Number(s)	Total Acres	Species	Lbs *PLS/ac.	Total Lbs. PLS
		Alfalfa	6.0	
		Alsike Clover	1.5	
		Red Clover	5.0	
		Ladino Clover	1.5	

### ACTUAL HERBICIDE APPLICATION AND INTERSEEDING INFORMATION PROVIDED BY LANDOWNER

CRP Field No.	Acres	Herbicide Applied	Rate/Formulation	Date Applied	Seeding Rate	Seeding Date

**Note:** Keep copies of seed tags and other required documentation to submit to FSA.