



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Wildlife Enhancement Activity - Wildlife Friendly Haying Management

Providing Wildlife Friendly Haying Management:

Haying intensity and timing, especially during the primary nesting and fawning season, can cause tremendous mortality losses to both ground nesting birds and wildlife.

Benefits:

Targeted conservation measures are implemented to grassland wildlife habitat in pastureland, hayland and rangeland to provide a variety of habitat conditions in patches to maximize wildlife use. These measures include employment of timed haying to avoid periods when upland wildlife are nesting or fawning, idling paddocks or pastures and idling hayland during the nesting or fawning period, leaving a residual forage height conducive to wildlife nesting and fawning for the following year, prescribed burning, interseeding of native legumes and forbs or conversion of exotic hayland plantings to a mixture of species which meets the life history needs of the targeted grassland wildlife species.

Criteria for Wildlife Friendly Haying Management:

A. The producer *will implement and maintain at least two of the following* management actions (1-3) specifically for improving or protecting grassland functions for the targeted wildlife species.

1. Time haying before and/or after the primary nesting or fawning seasons (April 15 through July 15) will be conducted on at least 1/3 of the hayed acres each year for the targeted species.
2. At least 1/3 of the hayed acres will be idled each year. Idled acres will not be disturbed during the primary nesting or fawning seasons (April 15 through July 15) for the targeted species. Idle strips or blocks must be at least 30 feet wide.
3. Residual forage heights are increased to 8 inches on all hayed acres for wildlife.



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B. For all haying that will be conducted during the nesting/fawning season the producer will be required to implement *option #1 and at least one of the other two* to flush wildlife from hay fields during the mowing operation:

- 1) A flush bar attachment will be required on the mower.
- 2) All mowing will be done during daylight hours
- 3) Haying pattern will be either:
 - a) Begin on one end of the field and work back and forth across the field, or
 - b) Begin in the center of the field and work outward.

Practices appropriate for this enhancement include the following: Forage Harvest Management (Code 511), Prescribed Burning (Code 338), Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats (Code 643), Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (Code 645), Pasture and Hayland Planting (Code 512).

Operation and Maintenance:

Hayland will be inspected for presence of invasive or noxious plants which may compromise wildlife use. Pest species must be controlled when encountered. The producer will follow a prescribed burn plan or other plans developed for the purpose of improving and protecting the grasslands for wildlife.

References:

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