



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Plant Enhancement Activity – ANM03-Incorporate Native Grasses and/or Legumes into 15% or more of the forage base



Enhancement Description:

Incorporate native grasses and/or legumes into 15% or more of the forage base using adapted species and varieties, appropriate seeding rates, and timing of seeding.

Land Use Applicability: This enhancement is applicable to pastureland.

Benefits

Enhancing existing pasture by incorporating native

grasses and legumes can:

1. Improve forage quality and quantity
2. Build soil fertility (legumes fix nitrogen in the soil), increase organic matter
3. Increase plant diversity and promote wildlife habitat
4. Provide forage during seasonal slump periods
5. Extend the grazing season
6. Food source for pollinating insects

Criteria for Incorporating Native Grasses and/or Legumes into 15% or more of the forage base

1. A written grazing management plan that outlines specific goals and objectives.
2. Utilize adapted species, seeding rates and seeding dates according to local NRCS practice standards.
3. Determine species composition before and after seeding. Species composition must be 15% or more of native grasses and/or legumes.
4. If legumes are incorporated, a current soil test is required. Lime and fertilizer application to facilitate establishment and persistence of legumes is required if a current soil test indicates.
5. Livestock stocking rates that will allow for proper forage utilization.

Documentation Requirements for Incorporating Native Grasses and/or Legumes into 15% or more of the forage base

- A written planting specifications plan identifying:
 - Plant species' to be seeded.
 - Seeding rates and dates.
 - Site preparations and planting method
 - Amounts of fertilizer and lime to be applied.
 - Map showing locations where seeding activity is applied.



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Adapted species, seeding rates, and seeding dates

1. Frost Seeding (FS): broadcast seed in late winter/early spring
2. Sodseeding (SS): using a drill-type seeder to disturb only the area that is planted

Species	Method	Rate (lbs/acre)	Seeding Date*	
			North	South
Red Clover	FS	4-6	Mar 15-Apr 15	Mar 1-Apr 1
	SS	2-4	Mar 15-May 31	Mar 1-May 31
White (Ladino) Clover	FS	3-4	Mar 15-Apr 15	Mar 1-Apr 1
	SS	2-3	Mar 15-May 31	Mar 1-May 31

3. Renovating and Reseeding: Terminating existing vegetation and no-till seeding or using conventional tillage and conventional seeding

Species	Rate (lbs/acre) ^a		Latest Seeding Date*	
	Alone	Mixture	North	South
Red Clover	-	4-6	May 31/Aug 25	May 31/Sep 1
White (Ladino) Clover	-	2-3	May 31/Aug 25	May 31/Sep 1
Alfalfa	15	12	Apr 15-May 31 ^c	Apr 1-May 31 ^c
Birdsfoot Trefoil	-	6	May 31/Aug 25	May 31/Sep 1
Big Bluestem	10-12 ^b	-	Jun 1-Jun 30 ^c	Jun 1-Jun 30 ^c
Switchgrass	8-10 ^b	-	Jun 1-Jun 30 ^c	Jun 1-Jun 30 ^c

^aRates listed are for seeds planted with drills or cultipack seeders. Increase rates by 20% if broadcasting.

^bRate is pure live seed = (% germination x % pure seed) x 100

^c Seeding dates represent the range of dates (*i.e.* plant any time between Jun 1 and Aug 1

* North = Coos, Grafton, and Carroll counties, South = all other counties

For appropriate grass species to mix with legume, see NH NRCS Pasture and Hay Planting (512)
Legume seed shall be inoculated with appropriate bacteria
Remove residues with close grazing or mowing before seeding

References:

Improving Pastures and Hayfields. UNH Cooperative Extension
Pasture Production with Selected Forage Species. UNH Cooperative Extension