

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM34- Leave standing grain crops un-harvested to benefit wildlife



Enhancement Description

Implement a crop management plan that will allow a portion of grain crops to be left in fields un-harvested to provide food and cover for wildlife during winter months.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland

Benefits

Row crops such as corn and soybeans can be a very important food source for wildlife. Waste grain left

after harvest is used throughout the winter by many species, although under ice or snow cover, this grain may be unavailable to wildlife. One remedy is to leave a portion of the crop field un-harvested. Rows of these crops located on the edges of fields are often less productive from a crop production standpoint, but they can be very productive for wildlife. Corn is especially good for this purpose since it is held above winter snow and remains available all winter. Grain crops such as sorghums, sunflower, wheat, and oats also provide a food source for wildlife.

Not using herbicides on the crops that will be left un-harvested will provide additional food and cover benefits. This has the added benefit of reducing the amount of herbicides that are applied to fields. Allowing annual weeds such as foxtail, lamb’s quarter, smartweed, and common ragweed to grow among the rows of un-harvested crops will provide an additional food source as well as cover. Weeds in soybeans are particularly important as food and cover for wildlife. Since, compared to corn or small grains, soybeans provide relatively little cover.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement applies only to cropland where grain crops such as corn, soybean, sorghum, or small grains are grown.

Criteria

1. Leave a minimum of ½ acre of un-harvested, standing grain crops for each 40 acres of cropland. The ½ acre plots shall be located in a single location on the 40 acre unit and additional ½ acre plots shall be located on different 40 acre units, respectively.
2. Locate the un-harvested crops adjacent to permanent cover such as brushy fencerows, field borders, forest land, or wetlands (this does not include newly established trees, windbreaks, or shelterbelts).



3. Leave un-harvested crops standing over winter until it is time to prepare the soil for planting the new crop.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when the ratio of un-harvested grain crop to standing crop in the criteria above is left in the selected area.

Documentation Requirements

1. A map showing the location(s) where crops are left un-harvested,
2. The type(s) of crops grown and left un-harvested each year, and
3. The acreage of un-harvested crops.

References

- David E. Pitts and William D. McGuire, 2000. Wildlife Management for Missouri Landowners, Missouri Department of Conservation, 3rd Edition
- Krapu, G.L., D.A.Brant, and R.R.Cox Jr. 2004. Less waste corn, more land in soybeans, and the switch to genetically modified crops: trends with important implications for wildlife management. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 32(1):127-136
- Crop Field Management for Wildlife. Ohio Division of Wildlife. Publication 391 (R402)
- Establishing Wildlife Food Plots. Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet. W-19-2004
- Food Plots for Wildlife, Ohio Division of Wildlife



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM34 – Leave Standing Grain Crops Unharvested to Benefit Wildlife

This enhancement applies to cropland where grain crops such as corn and small grains are already part of the crop rotation. Leave a minimum of ½ acre of unharvested standing grain per 40 acres. Herbicides may be used to treat problematic weeds or noxious/invasive weed, but should be applied as a spot application where needed. Application of herbicides should be done to ensure minimal risk to the target wildlife species. Apply low risk products.

This activity may be used with any other enhancement.

Potential Duplicate Practices:
None