

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Forage and Biomass Planting (512)

Forage and biomass planting is used to establish adapted and/or compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of herbaceous species suitable for pasture, hay, or biomass production.

Practice Information

This practice applies to all lands suitable to establishment of annual, biannual, or perennial species for forage and biomass production. This practice does not apply to establishment of annually planted and harvested food, fiber, or oilseed crops.

Forage and biomass planting can help improve or maintain livestock nutrition and/or health, provide or increase forage supply during periods of low forage production, reduce soil erosion, and improve soil and water quality. It can also be used to produce feedstock for biofuel or energy production.

Considerations for plant species selection can include climatic conditions such as annual precipitation and its distribution, growing season length, temperature extremes, and the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone.

Soil condition and landscape position attributes such as pH, available water-holding capacity, aspect, slope, drainage class, fertility level, salinity, depth, flooding and ponding, and levels of phytotoxic elements may be important considerations. Resistance to disease and insects common to the site or location may also be important.

Planting rates, methods, and dates may be recommended from the plant materials program, land grant and research institutions, extension agencies, or agency field trials.



Refer to the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for information on cultural specifications for establishing and managing the species for the intended use.

Common Associated Practices

Forage and Biomass Planting (512) is commonly applied with conservation practices, such as Forage and Biomass Harvest (511), Herbaceous Weed Control (315), Nutrient Management (590), Prescribed Grazing (528), and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.