



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E512M

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Forage plantings that improve wildlife habitat cover and shelter or structure and composition

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 512 - Pasture and Hay Planting

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants, Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 5 years

Enhancement Description

Establishing adapted and compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of herbaceous species suitable for pasture, hay, or biomass production that can provide cover and shelter or structure and composition for wildlife. Species must be planted into existing perennial stands

Criteria

- Wildlife species of concern for cover and shelter will be specified on the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) and will be a species that would be present for at least part of their life cycle in the geographical/physiographic region.
- The state's WHEG will be completed by an NRCS or partner wildlife biologist. Cover and shelter habitat requirements for the wildlife species of concern will be specified on the WHEG. The total WHEG score after installation of this practice will be 0.60 or greater.
- Select native, perennial, grass/forb/legume plant species (all species must be native) and their cultivars based on climatic conditions, soil condition, landscape position and resistance to disease and insects, which meet the cover and shelter needs for wildlife species of concern when they will be present.
- Prior to planting, graze or mow existing stands as needed to improve seedling competitiveness.



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- Recommendations for planting rates, methods, depths, and dates from land grant/research institutions, plant materials program, extension agencies, or agency field trials will be followed.
- Seeding medium that does not restrict plant emergence will be provided, and planting will take place when soil moisture is adequate for germination and establishment. Minimize soil disturbance during planting operations.
- Federal, state, or local noxious species will not be planted.
- Plant nutrients and/or soil amendments for establishment purposes will be applied according to a current soil test. Legume seed will be pre-inoculated or inoculated with the proper viable strain of Rhizobia immediately before planting.
- Plants will be selected that help meet cover and shelter habitat requirements for specified wildlife species during times that normal farm/ranch forage production is inadequate. Plant selection will help to increase scores on the state's approved NRCS habitat evaluation procedure for the wildlife species of concern.

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- ☐ Prior to implementation, select a perennial species or grassland mixture for establishment. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

Species	Forage category (grass, legume, forb)

- ☐ Prior to implementation, select planting technique, seeding rates and timing appropriate for the site and climatic conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

Planting Date	
Planting method	
Seeding rate	



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- ☐ If livestock are included in the grazing system, prior to implementation a grazing plan must be developed to keep grazing periods sufficiently short to allow for plants to recover before re-grazing occurs.
- ☐ During implementation, keep the following documentation:
 - Records and photographs of planting preparation and any materials purchased or materials on hand used for the implementation of the enhancement.
 - Documentation of seed (Pure Live Seed) and any fertilizer or soil amendments used for the implementation of the enhancement.
 - If livestock are included in the grazing system, documentation, and photographs of turn in/turn out grazing records for each field.
- ☐ After implementation, make the forage planting and grazing records available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.

NRCS will:

Prior to implementation, complete the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

Targeted Species: _____

WHEG score before implementation: _____

WHEG score after implementation: _____

As needed, prior to implementation, NRCS will provide technical assistance:

- Planning site preparation and establishment specifications meeting NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Pasture and Hay Planting (Code 512).
- Prepare specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
- If livestock are included in the system, develop a grazing plan to keep grazing periods sufficiently short to allow for forages to recover before re-grazing occurs.

During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meets the enhancement criteria.

After implementation, verify the grassland mixture was established to specifications developed for the site.



NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

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Participant Name _____

Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____

Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date

2024 Alabama Supplemental Guidance for CSP Enhancement

ENHANCEMENT NUMBER AND TITLE: **E512M:** Forage plantings that improve wildlife habitat cover and shelter or structure and composition.

Conservation Practice: E512 – Pasture and Hay Planting

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ENHANCEMENT: This is to establish compatible suitable species for pasture, hay, or biomass production that can provide cover and shelter or structure and composition for wildlife.

Important considerations:

- Make sure wildlife species of concern and cover and shelter habitat requirements are specified on the state's approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG). The total WHEG score after installation expected to be 0.60 or greater.
- Select and establish site specific native species such as eastern gamagrass, switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass or cool season perennial grasses or forb/legume plant species and their cultivars that can provide cover and shelter or structure and composition for wildlife.
- Use Alabama cooperative extensions recommendations for right plant materials, rates, methods, depths, dates, and planting guide for forage grasses ([Alabama Planting Guide for Forage Grasses - Alabama Cooperative Extension System \(aces.edu\)](https://aces.edu/forage-grasses)) and forage legumes ([Alabama Planting Guide for Forage Legumes - Alabama Cooperative Extension System \(aces.edu\)](https://aces.edu/forage-legumes)).
- Utilize the forage and biomass planting guide sheet No. AL512 for forage crops commonly grown for pasture or hay in Alabama and, the Geographical Areas for Species Adaptation and Seeding Dates. [512_AL_GD_Forage_and_Biomass_Planting-AL512_Guide_Sheet_2015 \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/512-AL-GD-Forage-and-Biomass-Planting-AL512-Guide-Sheet-2015)
- Exclude noxious species such as Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) and Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) from planting. Pests should be managed according to the Pest Management Conservation System (595) Standard.
- Apply plant nutrients and/or soil amendments based on current soil test. [Soil, Forage & Water Testing Lab | Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station \(auburn.edu\)](https://www.auburn.edu/soil-forage-water-testing).

PROVIDE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS.

- ☐ Provide NRCS with the selected forage species, seed tags, seeding rates and dates.
- ☐ Notify NRCS of any planned changes in species or mixtures or field operations.
- ☐ Provide maps of the area or location(s), digital images/photos of the area and indicate area on map, and dates of completed activity

The attached documents support the full implementation of this Conservation Stewardship Enhancement.

CSP Participant Name

Date