



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY
E512106Z2

CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM

Forage plantings that can help increase organic matter in depleted soils

Conservation Practice 512: Forage and Biomass Planting

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Soil Quality Degradation

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 5 years

Enhancement Description

Establishing adapted and/or compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of herbaceous species suitable for pasture, hay, or biomass production that can help improve soil quality of depleted sites through increase or conservation of the organic matter in the soil.

Criteria

- Select perennial, grass/forb/legume plant species and their cultivars based on climatic conditions, soil condition, landscape position and resistance to disease and insects, that will provide ground cover and root mass needed to be sufficient to protect the soil from wind and water erosion.
- This enhancement is applicable where soils have been depleted of organic matter (typically from direct exposure to air through plowing or disking, and/or having little or no vegetation growing on the soil for a period of time. In these circumstances, organic matter can be increased through planting of deep-rooted perennial species with the capability of moving carbon into the soil horizons naturally, and then managing these plant communities for optimum production of above ground matter (forage).
- 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.



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- 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.
- 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 and according to LGUs recommendations. Legume seed will be pre-inoculated or inoculated with the proper viable strain of Rhizobia immediately before planting.
- Inspect and calibrate equipment prior to use. Continually monitor during planting to insure proper rate, distribution and depth of planting is maintained. Monitor new plantings for water stress. Depending on the severity of drought, water stress may require reducing weeds, early harvest of any companion crop, irrigating when possible, or replanting failed stands.

Documentation Requirements

- Documentation of seed (Pure Live Seed) and any fertilizer or amendments purchased.
- Completed forage balance sheet for farm/ranch and grazing records.
- On-farm pasture condition scoring records annually for planted sites.