



EMERGENCY GRAZING & HAYING

Michigan CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

WHAT IS EMERGENCY GRAZING AND HAYING OF CRP ACREAGE?

Emergency Grazing & Haying is the planned harvesting of forage from CRP acres. When Grazing & Haying is managed according to NRCS Standards and Specifications and CRP Policy, plant health, animal health, and wildlife will benefit.

ELIGIBILITY

For 2012 ONLY, to be eligible for Emergency Grazing & Haying on CRP, the land must be enrolled in either CP1 (Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes), CP2 (Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses), CP4B (Permanent Wildlife Habitat Corridors Non-Easement), CP4D (Permanent Wildlife Habitat), CP10 (Vegetative Cover - Grass - Already Established), CREP CP1 (Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes), &/or CREP CP2 (Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses).

Emergency Grazing & Haying is not available on any other CRP practice acres.

Emergency Grazing & Haying must be included in your Conservation Plan (CPO) in order to be eligible. Emergency Grazing or Haying must be requested and approved by the FSA County Committee, prior to any such activities being started.

CRP POLICY

Emergency Grazing & Haying will only be allowed according to the Prescribed Grazing (528A) and Forage Harvest Management (511) standards in Section IV of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and CRP Policy.

A 10% reduction in the Annual Soil Rental Rate will be assessed on the grazed or hayed acres in the year the grazing or haying occurred. For the benefit of wildlife at least 25 percent of each field or contiguous field must not be grazed; and at least 50 percent of each field or contiguous field must not be hayed.

No Emergency Grazing & Haying will take place within 120 feet of permanent streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands, or other permanent bodies of water. Fencing may be needed, but is not eligible for cost-share.

All livestock must also be excluded from seasonal bodies of water, and any planted trees or shrubs. Fencing may be needed, but is not eligible for cost-share.

Emergency Grazing & Haying will not be allowed on CRP acres during the primary nesting season to protect ground-nesting wildlife. See the following for specific information regarding specific grasses and management.

Emergency Grazing & Haying will not start on CRP acres until at least 12 months after the **Final** Status Review.

GRAZING WARM SEASON GRASS and WILDFLOWERS

Warm Season Grasses (switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass and wildflowers in CP2, CP4D, &/or CP10 practices) may only be grazed from **August 1 – September 30** to protect ground nesting wildlife. All livestock must be off warm season grass CRP acreage by September 30.

Warm Season Grasses **will not be grazed lower than 8 inches** to avoid damage to the grasses, and to allow for adequate regrowth prior to the first frost.

GRAZING COOL SEASON GRASS and LEGUMES

Cool Season Grasses and Legumes (timothy, orchard grass, brome, etc. and legumes such as clover and alfalfa in CP1, CP4D, &/or CP10 practices) may only be grazed from **August 1 – September 30** to protect ground nesting wildlife. All livestock must be off cool season grass CRP acreage by September 30.

Cool Season Grasses **will not be grazed lower than 3 inches** to avoid damage to the grasses, and to allow for adequate regrowth prior to the first frost.

HAYING WARM SEASON GRASS and WILDFLOWERS

Warm Season Grasses (switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass and wildflowers in CP2, CP4D, &/or CP10 practices) may only be hayed from **August 1 – August 31** to protect ground nesting wildlife. All hay must be off warm season grass CRP acreage by September 15.

Warm Season Grasses **will not be cut lower than 8 inches** to avoid damage to the grasses, and to allow for adequate regrowth prior to the first frost.

HAYING COOL SEASON GRASS and LEGUMES

Cool Season Grasses and Legumes (timothy, orchard grass, brome, etc. and legumes such as clover and alfalfa in CP1, CP4D, &/or CP10 practices) may only be hayed from **August 1 – August 31** to protect ground nesting wildlife. All hay must be off cool season grass CRP acreage by September 15.

Cool Season Grasses **will not be hayed lower than 3 inches** to avoid damage to the grasses, and to allow for adequate regrowth prior to the first frost.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Any damage to the CRP cover as a result of Emergency Grazing & Haying or any other activity will be repaired at the landowner's expense.

CONSIDERATIONS

Ensure livestock have access to adequate water while grazing CRP acreage. Livestock must be excluded from streams, ponds, etc. and these may not be used as water sources for the purposes of grazing CRP acreage. Temporary watering facilities such as pipelines and tanks may be temporarily placed on CRP acreage, but must be removed by September 15 each year.

Minimize the distance livestock must travel to water for optimal animal health.

Consider grazing and/or haying no more than 1/2 of the CRP acreage in any given year. This will allow an annual harvest of forage from CRP acreage on a rotational basis, while providing cover for wildlife.

Periodic management (prescribed burning, interseeding legumes and wildflowers, etc.) and maintenance of the CRP acreage may improve forage quality. Cost-share is available for these activities if they are included in your CPO.

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