

**Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM52 – Implement fallow disking to improve wildlife habitat**



**Enhancement Description**

This enhancement is to encourage the implementation of fallow disking as a means to improve early successional habitat for wildlife species of concern.

**Land Use Applicability**

Rangeland, Forestland

**Benefits**

Fallow disking improves bobwhite foraging and brood habitat by increasing plant diversity, insect abundance, brood cover, and bare ground essential for northern bobwhites. Light soil disturbance encourages growth of many native grasses and forbs beneficial to quail and other wildlife. Plant species that respond to fallow disking include partridge pea, goat weed, poor joe, ragweed, and many other grasses, forbs, and legumes. The taller growing plants shield quail from aerial predators yet allow rapid movement at ground level. Numerous ground foraging birds and small mammals will also benefit from this source of food and cover.

**Conditions Where Enhancement Applies**

This enhancement applies to range or forest land use acres with less than 10 percent slope.

**Criteria**

Implement the following:

1. Develop a wildlife habitat management plan for the suite of species targeted.
  - a. Increase bobwhite brood habitat over a large enough area (estimate at 1-3 percent of the land use acres) as not to result in a predator sink.
2. Disc fallow strips perpendicular to the slope direction through open forest canopy and range areas or disc independent openings.
  - a. Disturbed areas must stay within soil loss tolerance (T).
3. Disked areas must meet the following specifications:
  - a. Minimum of 15 feet in width (wider strips have greater benefit),
  - b. Minimum of 300 feet in length or 1/8th acre per site in independent openings,
  - c. Disking should create at least 50 percent bare ground versus residual vegetation,
  - d. Perform disking outside of the primary nesting season, and
  - e. For optimal bobwhite brood habitat, more than one pass may be required in certain soils to create more smooth surfaces.
4. Review and follow the property-specific plan for fallow disking.

**Adoption Requirements**

The enhancement is considered adopted when the above criteria has been applied on the land use acre.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2015 Ranking Period 1

### **Documentation Requirements**

1. Copy of the wildlife habitat management plan
2. A map showing the location and acres of all fallow disked areas.
3. Typical width and length of fallow disked area.
4. Representative photographic documentation disked area.

### **References**

Hamrick, B., and B. Strickland. 2011. Supplemental Wildlife Food Planting Manual for the Southeast. Mississippi State University Extension Service Publication 2111, 2nd edition.

Wells, R. 2010. Habitat management for bobwhites: A basic guide for the land manager. Quail Unlimited. Americus, KS. <http://www.quwf.net/downloads/cnews/general/quail-habitat-manage.pdf>