

Conservation Security Program

Habitat Management Enhancements



Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

Minnesota, 2006

Time haying to avoid period from May 1 to July 1 when wildlife are nesting, fawning, etc and to allow for the establishment of residual cover for wildlife (maximum of 10 acres).

Definition

Time and manage haying to delay harvest during the period from May 1 to July 1 when wildlife are nesting, fawning, etc and to allow for the establishment of residual cover for wildlife.

Purpose

Secure nesting cover is often limited to areas where crop and hay production is the primary land use. Delaying the mechanical harvest of hay until after July 1 provides undisturbed wildlife escape, roosting, nesting, or winter cover and food. Undisturbed blocks of grass/forb cover will provide nesting cover while haying and crop management activities are occurring on adjacent fields. Herbaceous cover plots also provide roosting and thermal cover allowing a variety of wildlife species to access cropland food supplies during winter. Pollinator insects also benefit from undisturbed cover.

Conditions for Use

Areas eligible for this enhancement are limited to the following locations and conditions:

- The designated fields and soil types must be capable of being harvested prior to July 1 in a normal year;
- The designated fields must be within the established USDA acreage of existing cropland fields;
- The designated fields must have established hay vegetation. Newly seeded hay stands that would not normally be harvested until after July 1 are not eligible. In order to use this enhancement, hay must be listed as part of the rotations submitted in the benchmark inventory during the application process or you must currently have permanent hayland;
- Participants can choose to enroll entire fields or portions of fields but a minimum width of 100 feet must be maintained;
- Participants must annually harvest the designated acres;
- The designated fields must be designed to maximize wildlife benefits. Priority locations include areas greater than 300' away from tall trees, and areas adjacent and parallel to existing water courses, lakes, ponds and wetlands;
- All designated locations must be agreed to and scheduled by NRCS prior to implementing this enhancement;

