

**Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM10 – Harvest hay in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape**



**Enhancement Description**

Harvesting hay using conservation measures that allow wildlife to flush and escape. These measures include timing of haying to avoid periods when upland wildlife are nesting or fawning, idling hay land during the nesting or fawning period, and applying haying techniques that reduce mortality to wildlife.

**Land Use Applicability**

Cropland (hayland)

**Benefits**

Many species of birds and animals use pastures and hay lands as cover, to find food, nesting areas, and rearing their young. Examples include song birds, quail, turkey, pheasants, deer, and rabbits. Some species of ground nesting birds are in decline and others have become uncommon. Managing haying techniques can be beneficial to the survival of ground nesting birds and other wildlife species. Altering harvesting routes can provide escape routes for hens, hens with broods and hiding fawns. Delaying harvests or leaving portions of a field unharvested provide nesting habitat.

**Conditions Where Enhancement Applies**

This enhancement only applies to any annual planted or perennial hayland acres (a sub-component of the crop land use).

**Criteria**

Use one of the following techniques (A or B) to protect wildlife during haying activities.

- A. Defer haying. The producer *will apply and maintain at least two of the following* management actions specifically for improving or protecting grassland functions for the state identified targeted wildlife species.
  1. Do not cut hay on at least 1/3 of the hay acres each year. Idle strips or blocks must be at least 30 feet wide.
  2. For at least 1/3 of the hay acreage, hay cutting must be either before and/or after the primary nesting or fawning seasons based on state established dates for the targeted species.
  3. Increase forage heights after mowing to state specified minimum heights for the targeted species on all hayed acres.



- B. For all haying that will be conducted during the nesting/fawning season the producer will implement *at least two of the following* to flush wildlife from hay fields during the mowing operation:
1. A flush bar attachment will be required on the mower
  2. All mowing will be done during daylight hours
  3. Haying pattern will be either:
    - a. Begin on one end of the field and work back and forth across the field, or
    - b. Begin in the center of the field and work outward

**Adoption Requirements**

This enhancement is considered adopted when either technique A or B from the criteria above has been implemented.

**Documentation Requirements**

1. Map showing the fields that were treated
2. Option A – A picture showing residual heights of hay after mowing
3. Option B – A picture showing the flush bar attachment on tractor

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**Reference:**

- **645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management**
  - **511 – Forage Harvest Management**
- A. Defer haying during the nesting/fawning season, which is from **May 1 to July 15.**
- B. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet **F-5006.**  
<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/HomePage>
- C. Adjust hay cutting equipment to leave the stubble height shown below:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Minimum Ht. After Cutting (inches)</b>	<b>Minimum Ht. After Killing Frost (inches)</b>
Alfalfa	--	6*
Intermediate Wheatgrass	4	6
Meadow Bromegrass	4	6
Meadow Fescue	4	6
Orchardgrass	3	6
Perennial Ryegrass	3	4**
Reed Canarygrass	4	6
Smooth Bromegrass	4	6
Tall Fescue	3	6
Timothy	4	5
Big Bluestem	6	6
Indiangrass	6	6
Switchgrass	8	10

**\*The last harvest for alfalfa should be made 35-45 days before the anticipated date of the first killing frost**

**\*\*Regrowth should be grazed down to 2" after the first killing frost and prior to snowfall. Use the minimum heights for the key grass species in a grass legume mixture.**

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