Michigan CREP Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

CP1 Introduced Grasses and Legumes

454
million tones of erosion reduced a year

3.2
million acres of wildlfe habitat establishment

ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES

Can reduce operation costs per enrolled acre.

Hay* yields for cattle can reach the average of $120 per animal unit per year depending on rainfall and beef prices.

Mixing legumes can increase forage yield and decrease N fertilizer costs

*Haying must be authorized through the Conservation Plan.

For more information:
Contact:

Just the Basics

Introduced grasses and legumes enhance environmental benefits by providing soil erosion protection and habitat for a variety of wildlife. Some of the more common introduced grasses that grow well in Michigan include timothy and orchard grass, redtop, and smooth brome. Introduced legumes include alfalfa and red ladino, and alsike.

CREP Policy Guidelines

- *Introduced grasses and legumes will be established according to the Conservation Cover (327) standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)*
- Focus planting areas of high phosphorus loss areas of the farm
- 70 % of the eligible acreage will be introduced grasses and legumes. Only timothy and orchard grass, redtop, and legumes are accepted non-native species.
- 30 % will be planted in native grasses. This includes big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass. No other species are eligible.
- Seed Quality conforms to MI Act 623 and 329 and Regulation 715.
- Haying and grazing in seeded area is not permitted unless authorized in the Conservation Plan

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

FSA Farm Service Agency

What is the life cycle of introduced grasses and legumes?

SITE PREPARATION

- Sample the soil at least six months prior to planting.
- Soil testing for commercial fertilizer use should be done by an accredited laboratory with the North American Proficiency testing program when and MSU laboratory is not used.
- Existing vegetation can be removed using mechanical and/or chemical methods prior to planting.
- If the field is currently in cropland, weed control should occur prior to planting with tillage or herbicide.
- If the site is currently in sod, weed control with a broad-spectrum herbicide in the fall and again in the spring prior to green up and planting.
- Contact MSU Extension for herbicide recommendations.
- Lime and fertilizer can be applied prior to site planting. This is not often needed. The amount of lime should be determined by a buffer pH test.

PLANTING GUIDE

- Fall and Spring are the best time to plant
- Use a no-till grass drill for planting. If no drill is available broadcast and aerial seeding is acceptable.
- A carrier, such as potash, can be used when aerial seeding for even distribution.
- Seed no deeper than 1/8th inch.
- After seeding, the site must be rolled or cultipacked to ensure proper seed to soil contact. This is only needed when broadcast seeding.
- Maintain grasses in the first two years by mowing and spot herbicide is crucial for sucess. Bi-annual burning can be used in the following years.
- Grasses should not be mowed lower than 4 - 6 in.., 12 in. for native grasses.
- If needed, seed a temporary cover for erosion control.

DESIGN

CONSIDERATIONS

Species shall be adapted to soil, ecological sites, and climate conditions that are suitable for the planned purpose and site conditions.

PLANTING DATES

- Upper Peninsula
  10/8 to freeze or thaw to 7/15
- Northern lower Michigan (N. of US10)
  10/15 to freeze or thaw to 6/30
- South lower Michigan (S. of US 10)
  10/20 to freeze or thaw to 6/30

SEEDING RATES

Consider the benefits of warm verses cool season grasses, and forbs to different species of wildlife when determining which seed mixtures to use

See Michigan Common Seeding Tables in Section VI under Ecological Science Tools in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

LANDOWNER

OBLIGATION

- [ ] Develop a Conservation Plan with USDA approved conservationist
- [ ] Complete all necessary permits before installation
- [ ] Perform periodic management activities according to the Conservation Plan
- [ ] Complete seeding of the the practice within 12 months of the effective date of the contract
- [ ] Will maintain practice without additional cost-share payments
- [ ] Will not hay or graze unless authorized through the Conservation Plan

CONTRACT

TASKS

- [ ] Complete a soil test to determine appropriate site preparation and desired species.
- [ ] Develop written plans and sketches with client to outline installation requirements and to obtain necessary permits.
- [ ] Complete 327 & CREP - CP2 job sheet and cost estimate.
- [ ] Order needed equipment such as a disk, seed drill, roller, or cultipacker.
- [ ] Determine operation and management plan with client.
- [ ] Layout and stake according to plans and specifications with the client before installation.

"The soil under the grass is dreaming of a young forest, and under the pavement the soil is dreaming of grass" *- Wendell Berry*