

2006 CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

Wildlife Habitat Assessment Worksheet for Tier III PASTURE

Applicant:	Scored by:
Farm/Tract	Reviewed by:
Field No(s):	Date:

INSTRUCTIONS

Use this habitat assessment on offered fields that are used for pasture. For each resource component listed, review the conditions in each field that is offered for CSP. Fields with the same cover type and management practices can be grouped together as a conservation treatment unit (CTU) for habitat evaluation. To qualify for a wildlife enhancement payment, the field/CTU must meet the minimum point requirements for each of the resource components listed above, and have a total habitat assessment score that is greater than 0.50.

Factors that impact wildlife habitat are plant diversity, summer food sources, nesting and protective cover on field edges, and availability of food and cover during the winter. Undisturbed vegetative cover that is adjacent to pastures is especially important. Native plants and most weeds are important wildlife foods. Introduced plants include grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, most fescues, orchardgrass, timothy, and ryegrass, and legumes such as red, white, or ladino clover, and alfalfa. Management that avoids disturbance during the nesting season, yet allows time for sufficient regrowth to provide winter cover, is preferred. Sites with several plant species provide better food and cover, but it is not necessary for species to be completely intermixed.

<u>RESOURCE COMPONENTS FOR PASTURE HABITAT</u>	<u>Available Points</u>	<u>Minimum Score Required</u>	<u>Score for Existing Habitat</u>	<u>Score for Planned Habitat</u>
A. Plant Composition of Pasture or Hayland				
1. Mixture of native grasses and forbs	10	1		
2. Mixture of introduced grasses (less than 50% tall fescue), with forbs or	7			
3. Single species native grass, not mixed with forbs or legumes	5			
4. Single species introduced grass (not tall fescue), not mixed with forbs or or forbs or legumes planted alone (no grasses)	3			
5. Predominantly tall fescue (≥50% tall fescue)	1			
B. Mowing Management				
1. Not mowed/cut April 15 to July 15, and at least 8" winter height	10	1		
2. Not mowed/cut April 15 to July 15, and <8" winter height	7			
3. Mowed/cut occasionally between April 15 & July 15, and at least 8" winter height	5			
4. Mowed/cut occasionally between April 15 & July 15, and <8" winter height	3			
5. Mowed/cut frequently April 15 to July 15, and <8" winter height	1			
C. Use by Livestock				
1. Not grazed, or only occasional grazing; >95% cover	10	5		
2. Light grazing pressure, minimum grazing height 6"; 85 - 95% cover	8			
3. Moderate grazing pressure; 75 - 84% cover	5			
4. Heavy grazing pressure; <75% cover	1			

