



Haying CRP Land

K-State specialist gives advice on haying land for conservation.

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Landowners whose contracts with the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are ending may want to consider haying their ground.

“Land enrolled in CRP is generally highly erodible. Maintaining these acres with a perennial grass cover [or hay] will reduce erosion, improve water quality, enhance wildlife and reduce sedimentation,” said Walt Fick, K-State Research and Extension range and pasture management specialist.

Aspects to consider when haying your land include burning, fertilizing and time of cutting.

Fick said it’s a good idea to conduct a prescribed burn on the land if it has not been burned for a few years.

“Burning will remove mulch and standing dead litter. Although this material will add yield when baled, forage quality will be reduced,” he said.

Fick does not recommend fertilizing warm-season native grasses with nitrogen or phosphorus because of potential changes in plant composition.

For cool-season grasses and broadleaf plants, he suggests conducting a soil test to determine the best fertilizer and encourages land owners to follow recommendations found in the Kansas State University Research and Extension publications:

Smooth Brome Production and Utilization C-402

Tall Fescue Production and Utilization C-729

The proper time to hay varies for different climates. He said cool-season grasses should be hayed during the nearly full bloom stage to optimize yield and quality.

More information is available by contacting Fick at 785-532-7223 or whfick@ksu.edu.