Title of the Practice: Forage and Biomass Planting (NRCS Conservation Practice 512)

Definition: Establishing or renovating native or introduced forage species.

Purposes: The purposes of this practice include improvement or maintenance established forage for livestock nutrition and health, provide or increase forage supply during periods of low forage production, reducing soil erosion, improving soil and water quality and producing feedstock for biofuel or energy production.

General Expectations: The practice should only be applied to lands that are suited to the establishment of annual, biennial or perennial species for forage or biomass production. It doesn’t apply to the establishment of annually planted and harvested food, fiber or oilseed crops. Selection of plant species and/or cultivar should be based on suitability of the crop with respect to environmental and soil conditions (chemical and physical properties).

Additional management expectations:

* Follow professional recommendations on dates, rates and methods of planting into properly prepared soils with adequate moisture for germination and emergence.
* Seed and planting material shall meet state quality standards and not include federal, state or locally defined noxious species. Use pre-inoculated seed or inoculate legume species with the proper strain of Rhizobia immediately before planting.
* Annual soil testing, fertilization and lime application is expected.
* In areas where animals congregate consider establishing persistent species that can tolerate close grazing and trampling.
* Overseeding legumes to established pastures is intended for pastures that have 50-80% ground cover by existing grass. If pasture is less than 50% cover, then grass needs to be re-established. If grass is more than 80% ground cover, it might be difficult for the legume to become established without some method of suppression of the existing grass.

Additional management considerations for specific resource concerns:

* For livestock nutrition/health, use forage species that will meet the desired level of nutrition (quantity/quality) appropriate for the species. Forge species planted as mixtures will exhibit similar palatability to avoid selective grazing.
* To supplement forage supply, select plants that will help meet livestock forage demand during times when “normal” production is inadequate.
* Where carbon sequestration is a goal, select deep-rooted perennial species.

Operation and Maintenance: Inspect, calibrate and monitor planting equipment prior to and during use. Monitor new plantings for water stress.

Practice financing (2014):

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| Practice | Component\* | Unit | Practice Rate NC/SC |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\* | Cool season grass and legume forage | Acre | $326.83 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\* | Cool season grass and legume forage HU\*\* | Acre | $392.19 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting | Overseeding legumes | Acre | $271.21/90.55 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting | Overseeding legumes HU | Acre | $325.45/108 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Overseeding legumes organic | Acre | $88.41 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Overseeding legumes organic HU | Acre | $106 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting | Native warm season grass | Acre | $204.73/114 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting | Native warm season grass HU | Acre | $225.17/136 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\* | Native warm season grass mix | Acre | $302.87 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\* | Native warm season grass mix HU | Acre | $342.95 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Introduced perennial grasses organic | Acre | $188 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Introduced perennial grasses organic HU | Acre | $226 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Grass establishment sprigging | Acre | $150 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Grass establishment sprigging HU | Acre | $181 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Introduced perennial grasses | Acre | $123 |
| Forage and Biomass Planting\*\*\*\* | Introduced perennial grasses HU | Acre | $148 |

\*Annual soil testing, fertilization, lime and “seedbed preparation, seed & seeding are included in all components.

\*\*HU = Historically Underserved and Beginning Farmer Rates

\*\*\*NC only

\*\*\*\*SC only