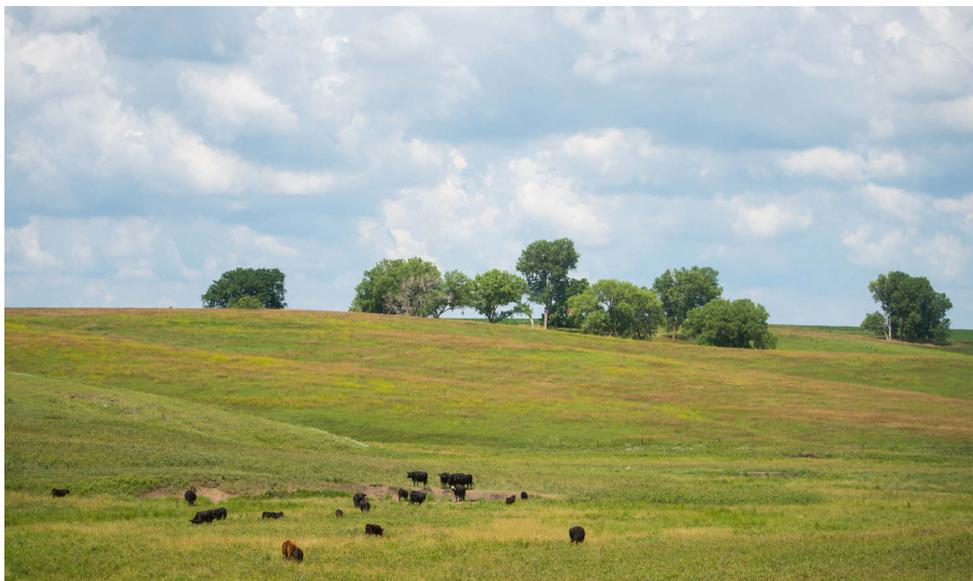


Conservation Stewardship Program Practices for Pasture



If you are implementing conservation practices on your operation and want to do more, the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) can help you achieve your goals.

The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), provides financial and technical assistance for producers to take their existing conservation efforts to the next level over the course of five years. This voluntary program allows producers to select practices based on the unique needs of an operation—no two contracts look the same.

This booklet contains a portion of the CSP practices and their benefits available for pastures in Nebraska. For a full list of CSP practices, visit your local USDA Service Center.



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Access control

Creating barriers such as fences, gates, or signs controls the access of animals, people, vehicles, and equipment to protect natural resources in a given area.



Reduce disturbances of soil and vegetation, reduce soil compaction, improve water use, protect native habitat

Brush management

Through this practice, a healthy ecological balance of native plants is restored by controlling invasive or noxious woody plant species through targeted mechanical, chemical, or biological methods, as well as prescribed burning.



Improve forage, improve wildlife habitat, reduce erosion, reduce wildfire hazards, control pervasive plants

Early successional habitat development and management

Through this practice, vegetated areas are disturbed by mechanical, chemical, or biological means to encourage the regrowth of plants that benefit desired wildlife species.



Reduce erosion, improve water quality, improve wildlife habitat, improve forage, reduce wildfire hazard

Fence

After careful consideration of fencing type, terrain, impact on wildlife, and local laws, installing fence can regulate the movement of and care for livestock.



Control movement of livestock or wildlife, reduce excessive soil disturbance, facilitate grazing management

Fishpond management

Through this practice, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs are managed to enhance habitat and increase desirable fish populations by removing overpopulated or unwanted species.



Increase fish production, improve water quality, increase beneficial aquatic habitat

Forage harvest management

Forage harvest management requires the mechanical harvest of forage for animal feed at a time that accounts for both drought and wet conditions.



Reduce erosion, increase vegetative cover, increase soil biomass, improve water use, improve wildlife habitat, improve feed and forage

Many producers in Nebraska rely on adequate hay stores to feed cattle during the winter months. In addition to preserving the quality of hay, forage management has a significant impact on local wildlife and can be adjusted to benefit desired species.

Fuel break

By clearing vegetation, debris, and litter on a strip or block of land, fuel breaks reduce the risk of wildfire by creating areas where a fire will run out of fuel and stop progressing.



Reduce wildfire risk to land and structures

CSP practices are designed to benefit multiple aspects of your operation, including your bottom line.



Herbaceous weed treatment

Herbaceous weed treatment restores a healthy ecological environment of plant species by controlling invasive or noxious weeds—annuals and perennials without woody stems—through targeted mechanical, chemical, or biological methods.



Improve forage, improve wildlife habitat, reduce erosion, reduce wildfire hazards, control pervasive plants

Noxious weeds, including musk thistle and leafy spurge, can cost producers over time as they reduce the amount of land suitable for grazing. Herbaceous weed treatment allows producers to regain control of vegetative areas through the use of mowing, spraying, or other methods.

Livestock pipeline

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of prescribed grazing, pipelines and watering facilities are installed to transfer water from a single source to several locations for livestock consumption.



Reduce energy use, improve animal distribution

Livestock shelter structure

After careful consideration of livestock type, location, and needs, installing shelter structures, either permanent or portable, can protect animals from negative environmental factors and improve the distribution of grazing.



Protect livestock, improve animal distribution

Pasture and hay planting

Through this practice, producers plant new perennial plant species for pasture and hay production.



Reduce erosion, improve livestock health, increase forage, improve water quality, improve soil health





Pest management conservation system

This practice combines natural resource conservation with integrated pest management, which monitors, prevents, and controls pests—including plants, insects, and pathogens—in the most economical and least hazardous way possible.



Reduce pest pressure, reduce harmful runoff, reduce injury to beneficial organisms

In certain scenarios, a properly executed pest management conservation system can increase the presence of dung beetles, which facilitate the recycling of nutrients and promote soil and grassland health.

Prescribed burning

This practice controls undesirable vegetation, pests, pathogens, and disease through the use of fire and requires extensive training, planning, and support personnel to determine the proper conditions and safe execution of the burn.



Improve forage, improve wildlife habitat, reduce wildfire hazards, improve soil health, control pervasive plants

Prescribed burning is an essential practice in areas heavily impacted by undesirable plant species such as Eastern red cedar. Always consult a professional when planning a controlled burn on your land.

Find your local USDA Service Center at
nrcs.usda.gov/contact/find-a-service-center

Prescribed grazing

Prescribed grazing promotes animal health and land stewardship by adjusting the intensity, frequency, and timing of grazing to allow forage plants time for growth and recovery.



Increase desired plant species, improve forage, reduce erosion, improve soil health, improve wildlife habitat

Prescribed grazing is one of the most popular practices for pasture management in Nebraska. While time-intensive, many producers cite noticeable differences in the quality of their pastures and their ability to support livestock, even in times of drought.

Riparian forest buffer

Riparian forest buffers are established by planting trees and shrubs along waterways and water bodies to reduce the transport of contaminants, such as sediment and pesticides, into surface and groundwater.



Reduce erosion, improve water quality, improve wildlife habitat, increase soil biomass, lower water temperatures, improve water bank structure, increase plant diversity

Riparian herbaceous cover

To establish riparian herbaceous cover, water-tolerant grasses and other herbaceous plants are seeded along water bodies or other aquatic habitats, particularly areas that are prone to periodic flooding or lack native plant communities.



Improve wildlife habitat, improve water quality, stabilize streambanks and shorelines, increase soil biomass, reduce erosion, reduce harmful runoff

Shallow water development and management

This practice establishes habitat, typically through excavation or flooding, for fish and wildlife that depend on shallow water, such as shorebirds and waterfowl.



Improve wildlife habitat

Already implementing these practices? Ask your NRCS field representative how to increase their impact with enhancements.





Many of these practices can be implemented simultaneously to increase the benefits.

Silvopasture establishment

Through the introduction or enhancement of trees and forage, this practice—establishing a combination of trees and compatible forages on the same acreage—establishes grazing systems that combine trees and livestock.



Improve water quality, reduce erosion, improve soil quality, improve wildlife habitat

Stream crossing

This practice requires the construction of a bridge, culvert, or ford crossing over or through a stream to provide better access for people, livestock, equipment, and vehicles.



Reduce harmful runoff, reduce erosion, improve access, improve water quality

Stream habitat improvement and management

This practice encourages the inspection and repair of streambanks and streambeds to develop or improve habitat for desired wildlife.



Improve wildlife habitat, stabilize streambanks and beds, create healthy stream ecosystems

Streambank and shoreline protection

Once the instability of a shoreline is determined, structures and plant vegetation are used to improve stream stability and maintain water flow.



Stabilize streambanks and shorelines, reduce erosion, improve water capacity, improve wildlife habitat, improve aesthetics

Structures for wildlife

Through this practice, artificial wildlife structures, such as nesting boxes, are constructed and installed to provide habitat where natural structures are lacking.



Improve wildlife habitat

Popular among livestock producers, this practice can also be used to install escape ramps in water troughs that pose an immediate danger or threat to at-risk species.

Tree/shrub establishment

Tree/shrub establishment requires the planting of native trees and shrubs through seeding, direct planting, and natural regeneration based on location.



Improve plant health, increase plant diversity, improve water quality, improve native habitat, reduce erosion, improve wildlife habitat, provide shade and shelter for livestock

Upland wildlife habitat management

Upland wildlife habitat management is the establishment of vegetation or structures that provide food, shelter, and corridors to conserve wildlife species and ecosystems.



Improve wildlife habitat, increase select animal populations, increase value of landscape

The establishment and careful management of wildlife habitat has the potential to increase populations of popular upland wildlife, including pheasant and quail.

Wetland wildlife habitat management

Through this practice, wetland habitat is established by managing water depths, addressing invasive plant species, and planting vegetation that provides food and shelter for targeted wildlife, such as migratory waterfowl and other waterbirds.



Improve wildlife habitat

Wildlife habitat planting

This practice includes the conversion of cropland, pasture, or poor-quality habitat into high-quality habitat for wildlife through the planting or seeding of desirable herbaceous plants and shrubs.



Improve wildlife habitat, increase pollinator habitat

Adding nectar- and pollen-producing plants to field borders, buffer strips, windbreaks, and other areas is one way to support pollinators and add beauty to the landscape. Milkweed can also be incorporated to support monarch butterflies.

Windbreak/shelterbelt establishment

Windbreaks or shelterbelts are established by planting a single row or multiple rows of trees and/or shrubs to protect a given area during weather events.



Reduce erosion, improve plant health, provide shelter, improve wildlife habitat

Watch videos about these practices at farmers.gov/conservation/conservation-at-work



Want to connect with a producer implementing these practices?
Ask about our Conservation Mentorship Network.

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