Food Plots on CREP Easements

General Food Plot Guidelines:

- Always follow Illinois State Laws governing planting and manipulation of food plots (baiting).
- Always follow rules provided by FSA during the term of the 15-year Federal Contract.
- Use the NRCS standards and specifications (Conservation Practice 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management) as reference for managing for the desired wildlife species to determine:
  - suitable plant species for food plots,
  - establishment and management of food plots,
  - food plot location, and
  - total acres to be devoted to food plots.
- Apply this practice to CREP/CRP land that is suitably located and adapted to the establishment of annual or perennial wildlife food plots.
- Food plots shall:
  - enhance wildlife habitat,
  - be managed such that erosion levels are at or below the soil loss tolerance,
  - prevent degradation of environmental benefits from recurring
  - be included in the approved conservation plan, and
  - be carried out as specified in the approved conservation plan.

Guidelines for Food Plots on Expired Federal Contract Acres and CREP Additional Acres:

- Food plots may be moved from year-to-year and, if relocated, the previous food plot area **must** be seeded to an approved permanent vegetative cover at the landowner’s expense. The producer must inform SWCD/IDNR of new location.
- Food plots may not be harvested or manipulated (except for mowing or discing of sunflowers for dove management).
- Total acreage in food plots cannot exceed 10% of the total easement acres.
- Food plots must be at least 30’ wide.
- No single food plot can exceed 5 acres.
- Food plots must be a minimum of 660’ from one another if together they sum five acres or more.
- Food plots cannot exceed 10% of a distinct area or field.
- Landowners may not clear native woody vegetation greater than 3” diameter at breast height (DBH) in order to establish food plots.
- Landowners may not clear an area with an average canopy cover greater than 25% of native woody vegetation in order to establish food plots.
- Landowners may not clear trees planted as part of a Federal Contract.
• Food plots are generally allowed on the following Federal CREP/CRP Conservation Practices:
  o CP1
  o CP2
  o CP3
  o CP3A
  o CP4D
  o CP25
• After IDNR review, food plots may be allowed on expired Federal CREP/CRP Conservation Practices: CP9, CP21, CP22, and/or CP23.
  o After IDNR approval on these practices, food plots may be:
    ▪ permitted only if the conservation practice was applied to an entire field,
    ▪ prohibited if the conservation practice is less than 100’ wide on average,
    ▪ prohibited within 50’ of a river or stream,
    ▪ prohibited within 30’ of where earthwork was conducted for wetland restoration or shallow water area, and
    ▪ prohibited on berms or levees.

### Conservation Practice Reference Table

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