



# Wildlife Food Plot

## Michigan CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

### CRP – CP12

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

October 2006



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

#### What is a Wildlife Food Plot?

A Wildlife Food Plot is an area planted to annual grains (corn, soybeans, sunflowers, millet, etc.) or legumes (alsike, red, and ladino clovers or alfalfa) to provide wildlife food and cover.

#### ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for this practice with the Conservation Reserve Program, the land must have a cropping history (4 out of 6 years from 1996-2001). Wildlife Food Plots are not eligible by themselves; they are only eligible as a component with other practices.

#### CRP POLICY

Wildlife Food Plots are only eligible with CP1, CP2, CP3, CP3A, CP4D, CP10, CP11, or CP32.

In Michigan, each Wildlife Food Plot must be at least 0.25 acres each, but no larger than 10% of a field, not to exceed 5.0 acres per field. Both annual grain food plots and legume food plots are eligible. Cost-share is not available for Wildlife Food Plots.

#### OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Undesirable plants, insects, and pests shall be controlled, including such maintenance as necessary to avoid detrimental effects to the surrounding land. Some of the most common pests that need controlled on CRP acreage include Autumn Olive, Multiflora Rose, Spotted Knapweed, Quackgrass, etc.

At least ½ of **Annual** Wildlife Food Plots will be planted annually at the landowner's expense. **Legume** food plots will be reseeded at the landowner's expense as needed. Wildlife Food Plots may be at the same location for the life of the contract, or may be moved. If

moved, the prior food plot must be seeded to a permanent approved cover at the landowner's expense.

**After** the Final Status Review, maintain the planting according to your CRP conservation plan. Maintenance activities are allowed only on a spot basis and only if necessary to maintain stand health, maintain stand diversity, or control pests that will damage the CRP cover or adjacent lands. **MOWING** is only authorized between Aug 1<sup>st</sup> and Aug 20<sup>th</sup> to protect ground-nesting wildlife and to allow re-growth for winter cover. Other maintenance activities or Mid-Contract Management will only be allowed outside the designated dates to protect ground-nesting wildlife. Designated dates are from May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>. If management or maintenance activities are needed within these dates, the FSA County Committee **must** approve the management activity **prior to** the activity occurring.

**Mowing for generic weed control or for cosmetic purposes is prohibited.**

#### OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Locate Wildlife Food Plots next to woody cover or native grasses, and only locate annual food plots in non-erosive areas.

Food plots with a variety of plant types will provide greater wildlife benefits. For example, establish annual food plots of corn, soybeans, wheat, millet, etc. along with legume food plots on your property instead of just one plant type.

After annual food plots are established, consider only planting ½ of each plot each year, while leaving the other ½ fallow. Rotate the planted – fallow areas each year. This management scenario will provide both grains and annual seeds to benefit a variety of wildlife, especially upland game birds and songbirds.

See the attached plan map and the "Grain Food Plots for Wildlife" Conservation Management Sheet for specifics on your annual grain CP12, or the attached design sheet for legume Wildlife Food Plots.

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NRCS, Michigan October 2006

Date:

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