

CRP Conversion to Cropland

General Concepts:- We would like to no-till these fields and retain the soil carbon (organic matter) stored during the CRP years. Plan ahead. Start in August before the CRP contract expires. No wheat for two years - Take All disease is harbored in grass, particularly brome and wheat grass and it will do exactly as its name implies. Level and fix rough areas and maintain the advantage of a ten year head start on no-till. Cut trees and treat all stumps but cedar with Tordon within 10 minutes of cutting. Pile all trees, especially locust and hedge while they are green, as they will drop thorns within a few days of cutting. Fertilizer for slightly below your crop average on similar fields, corn and soybean yields range from 70-100% of fields with similar soils.

●●● **AUGUST** - Clip grass to get regrowth for a green target for glyphosate and other herbicides to work on. This is vital for most native grasses which are warm season species. These should be sprayed by September 15. Brome grass and other cool season species could be sprayed anytime in September or October. This needs to be cleared with the FSA office ahead of time. Test soil so you have a baseline for phosphorus, pH, potassium and other nutrients. Many fields were put into CRP because they were not that productive. They are likely to have deficiencies coming out also.

●●● **DROUGHT EFFECTS** - In 2012, corn and soybeans planted on native grass CRP not killed until summer 2012 were much poorer in yield than those killed in the fall. It is unlikely that many producers had the opportunity to kill native during our current drought. The same situation is likely to occur in 2013 unless our rain and stored water situation change. What are the options? Harvest native hay in 2013. Hay prices are quite high and there could be some good hay profits then kill the native after harvest. You could plant corn or soybeans and take your chances. Soybeans would be a better option as they can survive with less early water than corn and produce a crop off August rain.

●●● **APRIL** - Spray any recovering brome grass and apply early pre-plant herbicides. Plant corn about a half inch deeper than usual. Be prepared to make CRP field a priority when they are dry enough to plant. It is recommended not to delay planting as many times Mid-May to Mid-June our rainfall can make it difficult to be in the fields. Sidewall compaction from poorly timed planting and poorly set equipment has been a bit of an issue to the unaware. In most cases any chinch bugs will have departed for wheat fields with the first three 70 degree days. If chinch bugs are noted soybeans might be the best option.

●●● **MAY** - Spray and kill any native grass survivors. Plant glyphosate resistant soybeans. Plant about one-half inch deeper than normal to help reduce effect of little critters like mice and meadow voles. I would recommend ordering the beans inoculated and tasking delivery just a day before planting and I would also apply dry or liquid inoculate during planting. In other words, double inoculate.

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