



# Disking for Early Successional Habitat

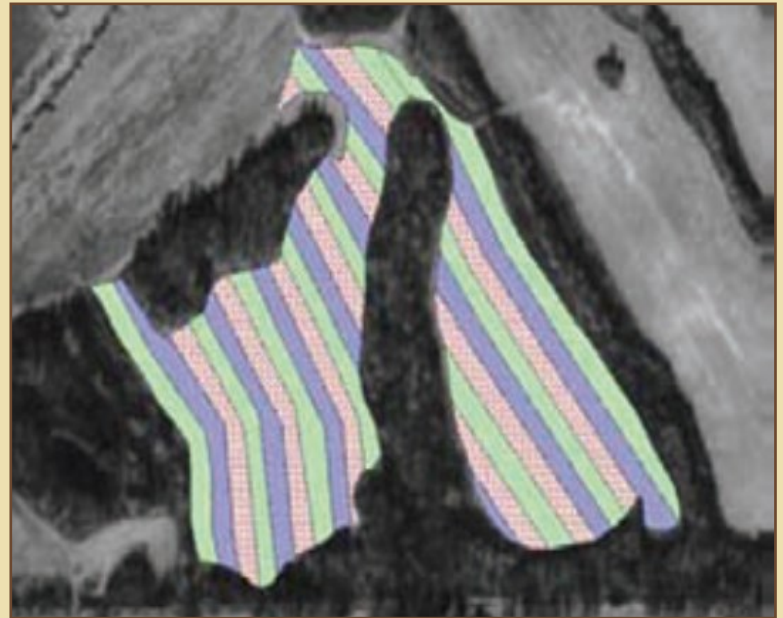
## PURPOSE:

Dense sod or vegetation is detrimental to wildlife feeding and movement and can be improved with a practice known as strip disking. Strip disking reduces residue, creates bare ground, and promotes desirable broadleaf plants that produce seed, attract insects, and provide overhead protection for many wildlife species. Insects are a critical high protein food source for quail and most grassland dependent birds. To be effective, strip disk in grassland habitats next to areas of usable shrubby cover such as covey headquarters, downed tree structures, edge feathering, or native shrub thickets.



## SPECIFICATIONS:

- Disk at least 4-6 inches deep to expose 50 to 75% bare soil.
- Disk in strips 30 to 75 feet wide. Disk each field in thirds on the contour (*Figure 1*). Each disked strip should be separated by an area of undisturbed vegetation twice as wide as the disked strip. In subsequent years, disk the adjacent strip. This develops adjacent strips of three different ages.
- Disked strips should be long and linear, and should follow the field contour to prevent erosion.
- Avoid disking in areas where concentrated water flow, which may cause increased erosion, is a concern.
- On flat ground, the disked areas could be in blocks (*Figure 2*). Disk the numbered block in the year shown (1, 2, or 3), and repeat the process again in year four.
- Disking should occur between July 16 and March 31. Late summer/fall disking tends to favor broadleaved plants like sunflower and ragweed, while spring disking tends to favor weedy grasses like foxtail. Disk before February to get the best response from desirable broadleaved annual plants.



*Figure 1.*

## SPECIFICATIONS:

- Native forbs and legumes can be over-seeded into the disked strips to improve long term plant diversity. Winter is the best time to over seed as many of these seeds need cold, wet stratification to stimulate germination.
- **Disking operations on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands must be in accordance with Kansas CRP policy. Consult with your local USDA field office or KDWPT wildlife biologist for requirements on fields under a CRP contract.**

## MAINTENANCE:

- Maintain the disking on a yearly rotational basis.
- Use herbicides spot treatments to suppress invasive vegetation and to control noxious weeds.

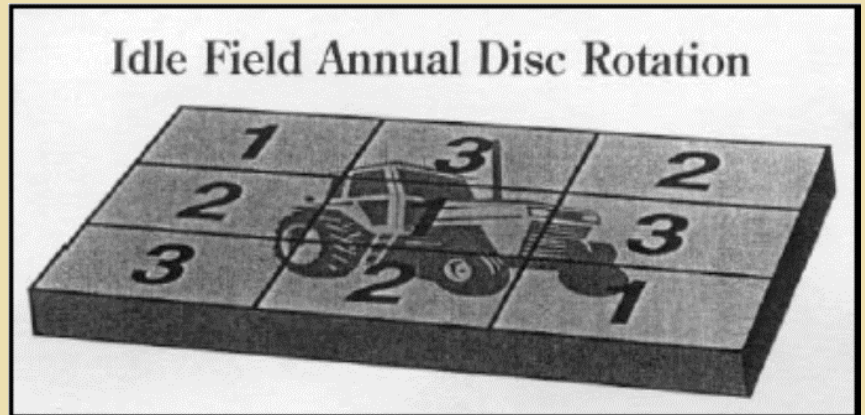
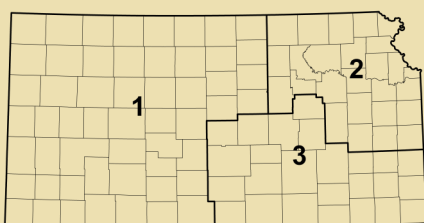


Figure 2.



*Strip disked CRP field. Note open space between grasses and broad leaf plant response.*

January 2016



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