



ANNUAL FARM WORKPLAN

The long-term farm ecological management plan is translated by the consulting ecologist each year into an annual farm workplan. The annual farm workplan includes required and recommended management activities that will facilitate progress toward achieving the restoration goals established in the farm long-term ecological management plan. It is the annual farm workplan that serves as the grower's guide for ensuring that they complete the activities needed under the Natural Community Standard in each certification year.

An example annual farm workplan is shown below. Note that the details of the workplan will vary depending on the circumstances of enrolled farms.

EXAMPLE: Annual Farm Workplan			Certification Year: <u>20XX</u>
Required & Recommended Management Actions			
Site	Management Action	Schedule	
Priority #1 - Required Invasive Species Control: In new prairie plantings (2 restoration sites) Unit #1: Name Unit #2: Name	INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL Mow prairie plantings in Units 1 & 2 approximately once/month during the growing season.	Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep After vegetation reaches a height of 12 inches in the spring/early summer, keep vegetation mowed to a height of ~6 inches during the growing season. A flail mower is best for this, though rotary and sickle-bar mowers will also work.	Flail Mower 
Priority #2 - Required Establish Perennial Vegetation: planting native prairie Unit #3: Name	REVEGETATION 1) Prep the site by repeated spraying (glyphosate) and/or tillage of current vegetation. 2) After final herbicide treatment, leave standing dead vegetation to minimize soil erosion. 3) Plant native prairie species.	Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Control of current vegetation should occur throughout the growing season – spray/tillage then wait for green-up, repeat. Plant the native seed using a DNR no-till drill (rental).	Unit 3: Prairie Restoration Site 
Priority #3 - Optional Prescribed burn Unit #4: Name	PRESCRIBED BURN Ecologist will coordinate this management activity with the grower.	Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov If a skilled crew can be assembled and appropriate burn breaks put in place, conduct the prescribed burn as weather conditions permit in October or November.	Prescribed Burn 

TRACKING STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES: INTERNAL PROGRAM RECORD-KEEPING & ASSESSMENT

Ecolabels and other agricultural sustainability programs often distinguish between **practice-based** and **outcome-based** standards or metrics. Practice-based metrics are those which measure the reported adoption of prescribed activities that are generally agreed to be important for on-farm conservation; their advantage is that they are easier to measure and more time-efficient for reporting, yet often lack regional or on-farm specificity. In contrast, outcome-based metrics require that data be routinely collected to evaluate the environmental, economic, or social effects of the implemented program requirements. The time and financial resources required to collect the data needed for outcome-based metrics makes their implementation impractical in most contexts.

The Natural Community Standard can be considered a mix of these two approaches, in which local farm conditions and regional conservation priorities are used to guide prescribed farm ecological management activities. In other words, the Natural Community Standard is a **science-based, open standard** that is responsive to ecological differences among enrolled farms and that uses principles of conservation biology and restoration ecology to ensure that farm management plans are crafted within a regional conservation context.



NATURAL COMMUNITY STANDARD: CERTIFICATION QUESTIONS

The following text is the introductory paragraph for the Natural Community Standard part of the Healthy Grown certification form. This is followed by the questions that growers answer as a part of certification under the Natural Community Standard. In order to certify the farm for a given year, the questions marked with an asterisk (*) must be answered “yes.”

Healthy Grown-certified growers work to restore and manage native ecosystems, and to protect ecosystem services. This effort brings the entire farm into the ecolabel program. A long-term ecological management plan is developed for each enrolled farm, and growers meet the certification requirements by completing an annual plan of work toward the plan’s long-term goals. The ecological management plan is guided by regional conservation priorities, and is flexible to the unique conditions of each farm.

- Q1:** Have you met with a Healthy Grown-approved ecologist to set up a long-term farm ecological management plan, which includes long-term conservation goals and priorities for your property?*
- Q2:** Do you have an annual farm workplan on file that outlines the management priorities for the season being certified? Please attach documentation of the annual workplan.
- Q3:** Were any ecosystems of high conservation value (i.e., high-quality remnant ecosystems or natural community management units), as identified in your farm ecological management plan, converted into other uses in the certification year?

(If yes, please submit documentation describing the extenuating circumstances for these changes, and how they will be addressed in a revised farm long-term ecological management plan.)

- Q4:** Were all required Natural Community management activities completed in the certification year?*
- Q5:** *For internal program tracking only.* Please complete the **Annual Workplan: Ecosystem Management Tracking Form**. This form provides the documentation necessary for the program to document the stewardship activities of enrolled growers over time, and communicate these gains to the public.

TRACKING PROGRESS

Although we do not have the staffing and financial capacity to routinely collect data assessing the biological diversity and ecosystem function of the enrolled farms, we do track annual management activities so that over time we can assess the area and type of ecosystems managed and determine the particular ecological restoration practices that are implemented on enrolled farms.

For more information, contact:

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