

Farm Stewardship Program

Native Plant Establishment BMP

Intent of BMP: Native plants are well-adapted to variable climatic conditions, require minimal inputs, and are resilient to grazing. Native grass mixtures not only provide a stable long-term supply of perennial forage, they also increase biodiversity, and provide ground cover and wildlife habitat.

Because native grasses tend to cure well on the stem and can be grazed late in the fall, native pastures are often used in combination with tame stands to extend the grazing season. Keeping cattle in pastures longer helps keep nutrients on the land where they can stimulate more forage growth instead of concentrating them in corrals where they can be lost to the atmosphere, leached into the ground, or carried away in runoff.

Funding Level: 75 per cent of eligible costs to a maximum rebate of \$10,000.

Application Type: **Pre-Approval.** Applicants must submit a pre-approval application prior to commencing their project.

This BMP requires a Field Sheet to be completed by a Ministry of Agriculture Regional Forage Specialist and submitted with your application. Inspections may be required before the project work begins and once the project is complete.

Claims involving seeding forages **MUST** be submitted within 18 months of seed purchase/invoice date to be eligible for a rebate and include a copy of the seed tag showing seed is Common #1 or Certified #1. In the event that a seed tag is not available or this information was not provided on the invoice, the applicant can request the seed be eligible for funding by providing a current certificate of analysis which includes germination and purity.

Technical Resource: For technical assistance contact a Ministry of Agriculture Regional Forage Specialist.

Eligibility:

- Must have an EFP or AEGP Certificate of Completion.
- **Basic Eligibility Criteria.**

Project Costs: Eligible Costs

- Seed costs associated with seeding native forages (see additional information below).
- Maximum eligible rebate for seed is \$75/acre (based on maximum costs for seed of \$100/acre).
- Establishment costs including seed bed preparation, herbicide application and seeding.
- Maximum eligible rebate for establishment costs is set at \$26.25/acre (based on maximum costs for establishment of \$35/acre).
- Rented equipment or applicant's equipment charged at rates included in the [Saskatchewan Farm Machinery Custom and Rental Rate Guide](#).

Project Costs continued:

Ineligible Costs

- Commercial reclamation projects.
- Breaking and reseeding of existing native forages.
- Costs for planting cover or companion crops.
- Seeding a grass seed mix including more than 20 per cent biennial species (such as yellow clover).
- Seed mixes containing invasive grass species: Kentucky Bluegrass, Crested Wheatgrass, Hybrid or Smooth Brome, Creeping Foxtail, Reed Canarygrass and Sweet Clover.
- Seed containing noxious or prohibited weeds.
- Fertilizer.
- Applicant or employee labour not part of in-kind equipment rates.

Additional Information: **Selecting the right native seed mixture**

Species should be researched based on intended long term use, soil zone and texture as well as many other factors which can affect successful establishment of native species. Thus a producer must work in consultation with a Regional Forage Specialist in order to understand site characteristics and ensure appropriate native species are chosen to promote the establishment of a vigorous long lived native stand.

- Must consist of a minimum of 3 grass species, 3 to 5 grass species is recommended and may contain a legume.
- Using a quick-establishing native species in the mixture can be beneficial because many native plants are slow to establish. However, a seed mix should comprise no more than 15% of short-lived, aggressive species. This will ensure short-lived species will not dominate the stand and prevent long-lived species from establishing.
- Priority should be given to seed sources from Western Canada. Seed sourced closer to home will have a higher success rate as it will be better adapted to local conditions.
- Forage seed must be free of prohibited or noxious weeds designated under *The Weed Control Act* (Saskatchewan). A certificate of analysis can be used to prove seed cleanliness. Contact a Saskatchewan Agriculture Forage Specialist for assistance with project re-vegetation requirements.
 - A seed certificate of analysis should be available from seed retailers for any certified or common #1 seed. It is recommended that you request a certificate of analysis at the time of seed purchase as it may be difficult to obtain after seed delivery/pick up.
 - Include a copy of the tag from the seed bag showing grade or certificate of analysis to verify seed cleanliness.
 - On wild harvested seed a purity analysis is required from a certified lab to show seed cleanliness and to prove the absence of prohibited or noxious weeds.
- Seedbed preparation weed control prior to establishment is an important factor in the success of native plant establishment. Two years of crop production are required prior to seeding.