

**FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT (511)  
 REQUIREMENTS IN TENNESSEE  
 2016 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

**Purpose:** To improve vegetative and residue cover on hay land thus improving soil health, forage production and regrowth. Managing proper forage height has many benefits including but not limited to: increased forage production (some studies show 37.5% faster regrowth), stand persistence is four times longer, weed pressure is 4x less, reduced water runoff, greater infiltration, improved organic matter and improved nutrient cycling.

**Objective:** Maintain forage height for improved soil, plant and animal health. Modify cutter bar to maintain the designated minimum heights listed below.

**Eligible Land:** Hay land. The same acreage cannot be contracted for both "Prescribed Grazing" and "Forage Harvest Management".

**Vegetation Management Requirement:** The minimum forage heights listed below must be maintained at all times. The forage height and timing of harvest are up to the producer. The recommended timing of harvest for grass is the boot stage (when the seedhead is just emerging from the stem) and for legumes the mid bloom stage. For grass legume mixes base the harvest on predominate desirable species.

<b>Forage species</b>	<b>Minimum forage height to remove livestock</b>
Tall fescue, orchardgrass, bromegrass	<b>3-4"</b>
Bermudagrass	<b>2-3"</b>
Tall upright grasses: Johnsongrass, Native warm season grasses	<b>6-8"</b>

Other considerations: For native warm season forages allow carbohydrate reserves to build up either in the fall by not cutting after September 1 or by allowing plants a long recovery in the growing season 60 days or longer. If cool season forage fields can be grazed in the fall or winter that's preferred to cutting hay since fall hay is hard to cure, stockpile fall growth is high quality and hay is twice the cost of grazing.

**Documentation:** *Record the date of harvest and the cutting height.* In addition, provide pictures of pasture fields with a landmark such as a fence or other permanent structure in them showing the height after cutting. Recording yield per field is optional but could be valuable relative to future harvest management. Optional is a forage test which is helpful in assuring livestock forage quality meets your targeted goal.

**Note:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Producer Signature**

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**Date**