

PURPOSE: Strip-disking is an efficient and cost-effective vegetation management technique that may enhance bobwhite quail habitat quality in grasslands and old fields.

METHOD: Strip-disking technique is simply disking strips through a field during the fall, winter or early spring. To develop and maintain suitable quail habitat, lightly disk (1-2 passes 3-5 inches deep) strips 15 - 30 feet wide separated by 30 - 60 foot wide undisked strips across the field.

In the second and third years, disk strips successively across the field to create a mosaic of one, two, and three year old plant communities. Do not allow strips to get older than three years. Undisked strips provide excellent brood rearing habitat, insects and seeds. Always disk along contours to prevent soil erosion.



TIMING: Do not conduct disking during late spring and summer to avoid destruction of nests of ground-nesting birds such as quail and wild turkey. Disk during late fall and winter for best results.

Seasonal timing of disking influences vegetation structure and composition. Fall disking promotes forbs and legumes such as ragweed and partridge pea, where spring disking promotes grasses such as foxtail. Fall disking may be more effective in promoting important food plants for quail.

PRECAUTIONS: Areas with johnsongrass should not be disked during the growing season because this will encourage dense stands of the grass. Eradicate fescue and Bermuda grass with herbicides before implementing a strip-disking program.

Photo Credit: Claude Jenkins



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