Set-Aside Acres for 1979

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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SET-ASIDE
ACRES
FOR 1979

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
The 1979 “Farm Program” has several similarities to previous programs, but also some differences. The primary purpose of this fact sheet is to give suggestions for handling set-aside acres.

Feed Grain and Wheat Programs
For more information, contact your local ASCS office. We will state, however, that the 1979 Farm Program is similar to previous programs in that the most important components for South Dakota are feed grains and wheat. A major difference is that the historical “acreage allotment” for each crop on each farm was discontinued in 1978. In its place is the “normal crop acreage” (NCA).

Normal Crop Acreage
The NCA consists of the acres of the annual crops that were planted in 1977. The crops are wheat, corn, barley, grain sorghum, oats, soybeans, flax, rye, sunflowers, dry edible beans, and other crops (such as millet) that were designated by the State Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee (ASCS).

The total planted acreage of NCA crops (including set-aside acres) for 1979 should not exceed the NCA established for the farm. If you plant program crops (wheat, corn, barley, grain sorghum), you must use some acreage for “set-aside.”

Acres of fallow and such crops as alfalfa, forage sorghum, potatoes, buckwheat, rapeseed, mustardseed, triticale and speltz were not included in the NCA. Though these crops may be used to raise total crop acreage above your NCA, they are handled the same as NCA crops on set-aside. You can use some of them as cover crops, but you cannot harvest them for hay or seed.

Wheat Program
The wheat program includes all classes of wheat—hard red winter, hard red spring and durum. You can sign up for the program and not make a definite commitment to participate in it until July 1.

If you decide to participate in the program there is no restriction on number of acres you can plant to wheat. However, you must set aside an acreage equal to 20% of the planted acreage, and the NCA will limit the total acreage of NCA crops that can be grown.

If you do not plant wheat, there is no requirement for set-aside acres. Of course, you will not receive any benefits from the program, but perhaps more important, you will not lose eligibility to plant wheat in future programs.

Feed Grain Program
The feed grain program includes corn, barley, and grain sorghum—see pages 3 and 4 of EMC 775 (rev) “Sorghum varieties and hybrids,” for a list of eligible grain sorghum and dual purpose sorghum varieties and hybrids.

The provisions are essentially the same as for the wheat program. You do not make a definite commitment to the program until July 1, and there are no restrictions on the number of acres that you can plant to any of the three crops. However, your NCA will place a limitation on all NCA crops that can be grown on the farm.

If you plant barley, the set-aside acreage must be 20% of the total barley crop planted. There is no voluntary diversion program for barley in 1979.

If you plant corn or grain sorghum, the set-aside acreage must be 10% of the total crop planted.

You can be eligible for “commodity” or “facility loans” without having set-aside acres if you plant non-program crops, such as soybeans, oats, flax, or sunflowers. If you operate more than one farm, all farms should be in compliance in order for any one to qualify for program benefits.

Benefits of Programs
If you sign up in the wheat program you will be eligible for low-yield or prevented planting (disaster) payments on poor wheat crops and deficiency payments on wheat if the average market price for the first 5 months of the crop marketing year is below the target price. You can receive the same benefits for corn, barley, and grain sorghum if you participate in the feed grain program.

All planted acres of eligible crops (wheat, corn, barley, or grain sorghum) are covered for low-yield payments and deficiency payments.

Payments are considered for each crop individually. You could get a payment for wheat or barley even if you had an excellent corn crop. Payments cover acres that were not planted because of adverse weather as well as low yields from acres that were planted. Payments will be about 50% of the target price for the specific crop and will be made if total production of the crop falls below 60% of the normal production for the total planted acres.

Deficiency payments will be made for the difference between the price received for the crop (wheat, corn, barley, or grain sorghum) during the first 5 months of the marketing year and the target price. If, for example, the average price of wheat during June–November is $2.50 per bushel and the target price is $3.40 you would be eligible for a deficiency payment of 90 cents per bushel if you participated in the wheat program.

Eligibility for price support (commodity) loans is also considered a program benefit.

No crops other than wheat, corn, barley, and grain sorghum are eligible for low-yield, prevented planting, or deficiency payments. However,
certain other crops such as oats and soybeans as well as the four discussed here are eligible for the price support loan programs.

**Offsetting Compliance**

If you own or operate two or more farms and are participating in the set-aside on one crop, you are eligible for program benefits, provided the NCA is not exceeded on the non-participating farm planting a set-aside crop. This provision is to assure that the planted acreage reduction is not offset by an increase on another farm which you own or operate.

**Compensation for Set-Aside Acres**

Unlike previous programs, there is no direct payment for the acres set aside for wheat, corn, barley, or grain sorghum.

**Uses of Set-Aside Acres**

Set-aside acres are not necessary for any crop except wheat, corn, barley, and grain sorghum. Set-aside acres must be cropland that was tilled during one of the last 3 years for the production of a crop. A vegetative cover must be maintained and weeds and insects must be controlled. The vegetative cover may be a growing crop, standing stubble, crop barrier, a mulch of crop residue, or an ecowallow practice. Set-aside must be at least 2 acres in size and may be the corners of fields irrigated with a center pivot.

**Growing Crops**

You can establish a cover crop, green manure crop, or forage crop for the next year. During the period that the acres of these crops were classed as set-aside acres, they cannot be harvested for grain or forage, but they may be grazed between September 1 and February 29.

Perhaps the most practical growing crop is a mixture of perennial grasses or grass and alfalfa. With the expenses of establishing one crop, the same acreage can be used as set-aside for several years. Though hay cannot be harvested, it will provide grazing of relatively low quality forage in September. In some cases you may be able to obtain cost-share assistance under the ACP or Great Plains Programs.

A solid seeding of spring-sown crops (such as oats, wheat, barley, triticales, speltz, or millet) that produce a grain crop may be used as vegetative cover, but you must clip the top growth before grain develops. Plant one half the normal rate of seeding at normal date of seeding. Winter crops (such as rye or wheat) seeded in spring do not head out and do not have to be clipped. Plant before mid-June. Ordinarily, most of these crops do not make good pasture after September 1. Soybeans are not approved for use as a cover crop on set-aside acres.

You can use any of the sudangrass varieties and hybrids and sorghum-sudan hybrids listed on page 1 of EMC 775 (rev), “Sorghum varieties and hybrids,” for planting on set-aside acres. They are better suited...
for grazing during fall than small grain crops. The sorghum-sudans have thicker stems and are more apt to stay erect and be grazable after freezing and after snow falls. The sorghum hybrids listed on pages 2, 3 and 4 of EMC 775 (rev) are not approved as a cover crop for use on set-aside acres.

You should remember that the foliage of most sudangrass or sorghum-sudan hybrids contains a high level of prussic acid after being frosted. You can expect some death loss if you allow animals to graze these crops within a week after freezing. The dry leaves and stems are safe to feed, but be very careful not to graze new growth that may appear after freezing; it too contains a high level of prussic acid.

**Crop Barriers**

In areas where it is impossible or impractical to maintain the minimum amounts of crop residue, you may keep in compliance by planting temporary or permanent crop barriers. Flax, corn, sunflowers, forage sorghums, sudangrass, or tall wheatgrass are acceptable crops for this use. These barriers reduce wind velocity, prevent wind erosion and hold snow in place.

**Flax**

Plant flax in strips spaced about 40 feet apart in mid-July. Plant ½ to ¾ bushel of weed-free seed per acre. Plant three or four rows spaced 6 to 7 inches apart. Plant on approximate contour for slopes over 6%. Leave standing until seedbed is prepared for the next crop. Do not harvest seed.

One way to plant the flax is to pull a small pony-press drill, with all but three or four seed cups closed, behind the middle of a large duckfoot cultivator. You may want to adjust the furrow openers for different depths of planting to improve chances of getting a good stand. Application of fertilizer on the strips reduces nitrogen deficiency problems on succeeding crops. For subsequent cultivations, you can move the middle sweeps on the cultivator and straddle the flax strips. A few farmers have proven that this system works. Other methods of planting that give similar results may be used.

**Corn, Sunflowers, or Forage Sorghum**

Plant corn, sunflowers, or forage sorghum (page 2, EMC 775) in strips spaced 50 to 70 feet apart. Plant two to four rows at normal row spacing. Space corn and sunflower seeds 6 to 10 inches (use narrower spacing for 2-row strips) apart in the row or plant sorghum with 4 to 6 seeds per foot of row. Plant on approximate contour on 6% or steeper slopes. Leave standing until the seedbed is prepared for the next crop. Do not harvest.

This practice has been very effective in other states.

**Sudangrass**

Plant sudangrass in strips spaced about 40 feet apart during late June. Plant three or four rows spaced 6 to 7 inches apart in each strip. Plant 8 to 10 seeds per foot of row. Leave standing until seedbed is prepared.
for the next crop. Do not harvest the seed.

We don't know that this type of barrier has been used in South Dakota; however, it has been very effective in other areas and is being tested in South Dakota.

Tall Wheatgrass

Plant tall wheatgrass in 2-row strips with 20 to 40 inches between rows and strips spaced 35 to 50 feet apart. Plant seeds about 4 inches apart in the rows. This perennial grass makes a permanent barrier. Plan the width between barriers to fit the width of the fallowing and seeding equipment that will be used for subsequent crops.

Crop Residue (Conservation Tillage)

You can use crop residue or ecofallow as protection for set-aside acres under certain conditions. The minimum amount of residue required depends on soil texture and whether tillage is done with an implement that ridges the soil surface.

With ridging, the minimum amount of residue that must be left on top of most soils is 500 lb per acre of small grain residue, 1,000 lb of corn or sorghum stalks, 1,500 lb of corn or sorghum stubble (cut for silage), or 3,000 lb of soybean stubble.

On soils classed as sandy loams, silty clays, and clays, the minimum amount of residue is 750 lb of small grain stubble, 1,200 lb of corn or sorghum stalks, or 2,300 lb of corn or sorghum stubble (cut for silage). On sandy soils, the minimums are 1,000 lb of small grain residue, 1,000 lb of corn or sorghum stalks, 1,500 lb of corn or sorghum stubble (cut for silage), or 3,000 lb of soybean stubble.

On soils classed as fine and medium sands, the minimums are 1,000 lb of small grain stubble, 1,500 lb of corn or sorghum stalks, or 3,000 lb of corn or sorghum stubble (cut for silage).

Special Practices for Ecofallow

Ecofallow is a system of controlling weeds and conserving soil moisture in a crop rotation with minimum disturbance of crop residue and soil. Weed control is obtained between harvesting one crop and growing the next with sweep tillage and/or herbicides.

Ordinary black fallow is not an acceptable use for set-aside acres. Though minimum tillage may be used to control weeds, you must leave some crop residue on the soil surface and/or use barriers for protection against erosion. This limits the number of tillage operations that can be performed. You may have to use herbicides to help control the weeds.

Atrazine + Tillage or Paraquat

Avoid leaving windrows of straw when harvesting. Spray with 1/2 - 1 1/2 lb of AAtrex 80W or 1-2 pt of AAtrex 4L per acre in small grain stubble immediately after harvest. The lower rates are for limited control of susceptible weeds such as downy brome or for use on higher pH soils. Rates of 0.8 to 1 lb/A active atrazine are suggested for best results on most soils. Do not use on sandy soils or those with exposed calcareous subsoil.

Volunteer wheat may not be controlled satisfactorily. Perennials and established annuals will not be controlled. Use tillage or 1-2 pt/A of paraquat to control annuals that have emerged.
If you get ¾ inch of rain within 1 week after applying atrazine, you should get good control of several species that were not up at time of spraying, such as downy brome, Kochia, wild lettuce, pigweed, Russian thistle, wild sunflowers, and perhaps some other annuals (not foxtails) until late spring. Use tillage and/or ½ lb/A of 2,4-D or 1-2 pt/A paraquat to control weeds that emerge during the summer. Plant winter wheat.

Carryover from atrazine applications made after September 1 may cause damage to the following winter wheat crop.

Per acre chemical costs are about 120 cents for 2,4-D, $2.25 for 0.8 lb of AAtrex 80W, $2.50 for 0.8 qt of AAtrex 4L, and $7.50 for 1 ½ pt of paraquat.

Cyanazine + Tillage or Paraquat
Avoid leaving windrows of straw on the field. Spray with cyanazine during early spring. Use 2 ½ lb of Bladex 80W on most soils or 3 ½ lb/A on heavy soils with over 2% organic matter.

The rates suggested under “noxious weeds” on areas infested with these weeds. Dalapon controls foxtails and other annual grasses if it is applied before they are 2 inches tall. Use 8 lb/A of Dowpon on areas infested with quackgrass. In many cases you can apply 2,4-D amine and dalapon at the same time. Use tillage or a second application of either or both herbicides to control weeds that emerge during the summer. Do not use dalapon after August 1 if you plan to plant small grain the following spring. Do not plant winter wheat or rye that fail.

Per acre costs of chemicals are about 60 cents for ½ lb/A of 2,4-D amine and $1.75 per pound of Dowpon.

Noxious Weed Control
Three herbicides [2,4-D, dicamba (Banvel), and glyphosate (Roundup)] may be used to help control certain noxious weeds. Cost-share benefits may be obtained in some counties for the use of these practices.

2,4-D, MCPA
With 2,4-D or MCPA spray field bindweed, Canada thistle, or perennial sowthistle during the first week of June with ¾ lb/A of 2,4-D amine (1 ½ pts) — may use ¾ lb/A of MCPA on Canada thistle. Spray leafy spurge or Russian knapweed with 1 ½ lb/A of 2,4-D LV ester (1 ½ qt/A) during the latter half of May.

Cultivate every 3 weeks to a depth of 4 or 5 inches with duckfoot or sweep-type cultivator until there is danger of reducing crop residue below the minimum levels. If this point is reached early in the season, you may spray actively growing

Flax barriers on the Milton Stiegelmeier farm near Selby (Photo courtesy of John Skogberg, county agent).
weeds a second time in September—at least one week before a killing frost is expected.

Minimum levels of residue for an entire field are as outlined earlier for ridged surfaces. However, the minimum residue levels are reduced 50% for areas that do not exceed 15 rods in width.

Normally you can plant a crop of small grain, corn, or sorghum within 2 weeks of the last 2,4-D or MCPA application without adverse effect on the crop. You can expect to reduce weed stands by 80 to 90% if you spray and perform three cultivations on bindweed or thistles or four cultivations on spurge or knapweed. If you perform this number of cultivations, you may be able to qualify for cost-sharing for noxious weed control in some counties.

Per acre costs for one application are about $1.25 for 2,4-D amine, $3.20 for LV ester, and $2.40 for MCPA amine.

Dicamba
Spray with 2 lb/A of dicamba (2 qt of 4 lb/gal Banvel) per acre during September on actively growing patches of field bindweed or Canada thistle. You should reduce the stand by 50 to 90%. During the next growing season, control annual weeds and regrowth of these perennials with tillage and/or 2,4-D as outlined for "atrazine and tillage." Plant winter wheat. Do not spray large areas, as injury to the crop can be expected.

Per acre cost of dicamba is about $15.00

Glyphosate
Spray with glyphosate (Roundup) to control emerged annual weeds and reduce stands of noxious weeds. Spray with 1 quart of Roundup per acre on actively growing annual grasses or broadleafed weeds that are less than 6 inches tall. Use 1½ quarts if weeds are larger. Do not cultivate for at least 3 days after spraying.

Spray field bindweed or Canada thistle when plants are actively growing and are at or near full bloom. Mix 3 to 4 quarts for Canada thistle, or 4 to 5 quarts for field bindweed in at least 20 gallons of water per acre. Spray during late summer or fall—before frost. Do not cultivate for at least 7 days after spraying.

Spray quackgrass when it is at least 8 inches tall. Use 2 to 3 quarts in at least 20 gallons of water per acre. Apply any time of year, but do not plow or spring till prior to spring application. Do not till for at least 3 days after spraying.

There is no carryover effect from the herbicide, and small grain, corn, sorghum, or soybeans may be planted shortly after spraying with Roundup.

Cost of Roundup is about $15 per quart.

Wildlife Habitat
You may use set-aside acres for the production of wildlife habitat. In some cases you may qualify for cost-sharing under the ACP or Great Plains Program. You can plant food plots or permanent habitat.

Food Plots
Plant corn, sunflowers, sorghum, or sudangrass on 5-acre areas within ¼ mile (preferably adjacent to) good winter cover.

Under most conditions, grazing with domestic livestock or harvesting is not permitted prior to March 1. However, under some conditions, it is permissible to cut and stack the crops for winter use by wildlife. Contact the local conservation officer to see if winter snow conditions make the stacking of wildlife food desirable.

Permanent Wildlife Habitat
Plant either alfalfa or sweet clover alone or in a mixture with a tall or midtall perennial grass such as tall wheatgrass, intermediate wheatgrass, switchgrass, Indiangrass, or big bluestem. A suggested mixture is 2 lb/A of alfalfa, 2 lb/A of yellow sweet clover, and 4 lb/A of tall wheatgrass.

Plant 10- to 20- (preferably 20) acre tracts. Do not harvest or graze with domestic livestock.

Cover photo: Cody Skogberg kneels near a flax barrier planted on set-aside acres. The flax strips planted on a contour help protect the soil from erosion (photo courtesy John Skogberg, county agent).