

## Strip Disking

After several years, pasture or lawn grasses will eventually form mats that are not beneficial to wildlife. Species such as brome, fescue, and orchard grass occasionally require some type of disturbance or they will become a monoculture. The dense stands of the same type of grass have little wildlife benefit due to lack of diversity of plant seed for forage, dense mats that force wildlife to move across the top of them, and increased predation due to having to move over the top of these habitat types. In order to increase biodiversity, strip disking is a useful tool in monoculture grass stands.



Lack of diversity in these stands makes these areas almost like a desert to the native wildlife in the area. In a couple of years, these types of grasses push everything else out. In order to allow other species to sprout, disking is done to expose bare soil and allow for germination of a variety of other plants. Increasing the diversity positively helps the wildlife populations in the area by giving the habitat a different structure and allows annual plants to produce a variety of seeds wildlife need to survive over the winters. You may also plant forb (flowering) species after disking the ground in order to enhance the biodiversity on the ground

In order to accomplish a successful disking and interseeding effort, landowners must 1<sup>st</sup> burn off all the thatch on the area 1<sup>st</sup> thing in the spring. Having this thatch on top of the ground would cause a disk or other implement being used to clog up constantly. With the thatch removed, bare soil should be ready for disc blades to make direct contact.



Brome Field Disking/Interseeding

D/I Cool Season Grass (4/26/2011)



D/I Cool Season Grass (6/1/2011)

D/I Cool Season Grass (7/27/2011)



D/I Cool Season Grass (9/1/2011)

D/I Cool Season Grass (12/1/2011)

Strip disking and interseeding a cool season grass stand increases the biodiversity of the stand as well as rejuvenated the grass that was originally in the stand. In the pictures above, it can easily be seen that the disked area has more vigor and a variety of plants growing in it after the treatment. The stand also has more structure to it, so during the winter snows, not all of it is matted on the ground like the solid stand of brome.

Disking and interseeding is a cost effective way to increase the wildlife value of stands of cool season grasses. This treatment will need to be conducted every few years to ensure that the grasses do not form a monoculture again.