

Managing Reclaimed Coal Mine Land: HAY PRODUCTION

Looks can be deceiving

A reclaimed strip mine will blend into the landscape and look virtually the same as undisturbed Iowa land. Don't be fooled. Just underneath the surface, the soil remains extremely fragile and susceptible to erosion. If the land is not properly managed, acid-forming materials may resurface and soils may begin to erode.

Hay production as a compatible land use

With proper care and management, reclaimed land can be used for hay production. However, it is important to remember that reclaimed land cannot be hayed in the same manner as undisturbed ground.

On reclaimed land it is recommended to wait until vegetation is well established before cutting, which could take several years. When hay is taken, it should be cut high. Reclaimed ground will not tolerate as many cuttings in a year as unreclaimed ground, so it must be monitored closely.

As with any hay ground management system, it is important to maintain soil fertility to generate the most productive crop possible. Each time hay is harvested, soil fertility is removed. Soil testing and proper nutrient management will help keep nutrients (nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and/or potassium (K)) in balance. Replenishing nutrients as necessary will help maintain the best stand possible.

Where to get help

For assistance with developing a management plan for your reclaimed area, contact your local USDA Service Center.



Resources

Each county in Iowa has a **USDA Service Center** where the local **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** and **Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** offices are housed.

These offices have technical and financial assistance available for land management and conservation practices.

Davis SWCD

402 Karr Ave
Bloomfield
(641) 664-2616

Mahaska SWCD

2503 Todd Street
Oskaloosa
(641) 673-3476

Marion SWCD

1445 Lake Drive
Knoxville
(641) 842-3168

Monroe SWCD

1701 S B Street
Albia
(641) 932-7134

Van Buren SWCD

1016 Franklin Street
Keosauqua
(319) 293-3371

Wapello SWCD

2938 Oak Meadow Dr
Ottumwa
(641) 684-6515