

Prairie Strips Cost Scenario

This scenario is based off of a 1-acre prairie strip (CP43) planting in Black Hawk county, Iowa on a farm with soils in the highest third of CSR2. The landowner purchased a pre-made seed mix from Pheasants Forever. The strips were planted into bean stubble requiring no site preparation with a native seed drill in the Spring. Establishment mowing occurred twice in the first two growing seasons. Prescribed fire was used as the required maintenance practice in year five.

Cost Scenario Table

	Method	Average	Low range	High range	10-year cost
Seed¹		\$158	\$143	\$175	\$158
Establishment	Drilled ²	\$53	\$43	\$62	\$53
	Mow (4x) ³	\$148	\$80	\$200	\$148
Maintenance					
	Prescribed burn ⁴	\$73	\$50	\$94	\$73
					\$432
Opportunity cost¹					
	Cash rent ⁵	\$324	\$233	\$324	\$3,240
Total cost		\$756	\$549	\$855	\$3,672
Cost share⁶		50%	50%	\$ 50%	\$106
Annual payment⁷		\$247	\$247	\$247	\$2,470
Total:					\$1,096



The Tallgrass Prairie Center maintains a list of Iowa seed and service providers on our website: <https://tallgrassprairiecenter.org/seed-service-providers>. Your local USDA office will provide technical service and guidance on best establishment and management practices. Seed dealers offer both pre-made mixes and can put together custom mixes to better suit your needs. Service providers have specialized equipment and experience for establishment and management practices, such as native seed drills and experience conducting prescribed burns.



Sources

¹ Seed mix costs use Pheasants Forever mixes between 2015 and 2022.

² Drilling costs are from the Tallgrass Prairie Center Prairie Service Provider survey and the “2022 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey”.

³ Mowing costs are from Tallgrass Prairie Center Prairie Service Provider survey and the “2022 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey”.

⁴ Prescribed burn costs are from Tallgrass Prairie Center Prairie Service Provider survey.

⁵ Cash rental rates are taken from “Cash Rental Rates for Iowa 2022 Survey,” <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/1841>

⁶ CRP practices are eligible for up to 50% cost share. This scenario assumes landowners receive the full 50%. For more information on CP43 visit: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2019/crp_clear_initiative_prairie_strip_practice_fact_sheet.pdf

⁷ Annual payments are based on 2019 average payments by county. Actual annual payments will vary based on the relative productivity of the soils and the average cash rent equivalent. https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_for_nra_epas.pdf



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