PROGRAM GUIDES

SPECIES AT RISK PARTNERSHIPS ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS

FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT (DELAYED HAYING)

Generated on November 10, 2026

Not Accepting Applications

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PROGRAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association

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View Program Online →

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Grassland birds are particularly vulnerable while they nest between early May through to mid-July. Many managed Ontario grasslands (hay fields) are harvested at least once in that time frame, which is devastating to young grassland birds. Delaying the first cut of hay until **July 15** or later allows grassland birds time to fledge the nest, greatly increasing survival rates.

INTAKE DATES

INTAKE	INTAKE DATES	ELIGIBLE PROJECT START DATE (INVOICE DATE)	ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPLETION DATE	CLAIM DEADLINE	PREVIOUS INTAKE GUIDE
1	Intake opens: May 14, 2024 9:00 am ET Intake closes: June 25, 2024 5:00 pm ET	April 1, 2024	December 15, 2024	December 15, 2024	View
2	Intake opens: November 26, 2024 9:00 am ET Intake closes: February 20, 2025 5:00 pm ET	April 1, 2024	March 17, 2025	March 17, 2025	
3	Intake opens: March 4, 2025, 9:00 am ET Intake closes: March 5, 2025 5:00 pm ET	April 1, 2025	December 15, 2025 *Forage Harvest Management (delayed haying) projects only*: August 15, 2025	December 15, 2025 *Forage Harvest Management (delayed haying) projects only*: August 15, 2025	View
4	Intake open date: March 10, 2026, 9:00 am ET Intake close date: March 10, 2026, 9:40 am ET	April 1, 2026	December 15, 2026 *Forage Harvest Management (delayed haying) projects only*: August 15, 2026	December 15, 2026 *Forage Harvest Management (delayed haying) projects only*: August 15, 2026	

COST SHARE SUMMARY

Flat rate of $40/acre

PROGRAM DETAILS

Who is Eligible to Apply?

To be eligible for SARPAL, an applicant must meet the following two criteria:
Be actively farming or own actively farmed land in Ontario as demonstrated by:

- A valid **Farm Business Registration Number (FBRN)** *For information on registering a farm business and/or a religious exemption, visit Overview (agricorp.com).*

  OR

- A Religious Exemption Letter provided by Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal (AFRAAT) (provide with application submission)

  OR

- A Cultural Exemption Letter provided by the First Nations Agriculture & Finance Ontario to First Nations farmers, verifying the farm business operates in a First Nations community (include with application submission)

  OR

- Proposed project is located on 25 acres of land or more, assessed as 'Farm', as indicated by the most current Municipal Property Assessment Notice or Municipal Tax Bill in the name of the farm business (include with application submission)

  OR

- An income exemption from the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program (i.e., Start-up farm businesses, Business structure change, Not a normal production year, Age/Illness/Death of a spouse) (provide with application submission).

2. Have a completed Environmental Farm Plan (4^{th} or 5^{th} Edition) and Action Plan verified complete by OSCIA.

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Eligible Activities and Costs

Funding is to support delayed harvest on hay fields until after **July 15**.

Eligible fields must be at least 10 continuous acres in size , with no windbreaks or other obstructions within the field. A maximum of 3 fields can be supported on one application.

Funding for this BMP is based on the size of the delayed haying field and the demonstrated added benefits to grassland birds. No invoices are required.

Delayed haying fields are supported based on the results from the "Rating for Grassland Birds" self assessment in the application form, adapted from the booklet "Farming with Grassland Birds". Eligible fields must demonstrate a "high" rating for grassland birds. Ratings will be determined by OSCIA from the self-assessment in the application form and from the site map(s) provided by the applicant, which should show adjacent land uses (see details under Documentation Required with the Application).

Funding will be issued at a flat rate of $40/ac.

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Ineligible Activities and Costs

Funding supports the action of delaying hay harvest until after July 15. There are no ineligible costs. Approval correspondence from OSCIA will confirm if any proposed field(s) were deemed not eligible (i.e., did not meet the "high" rating for grassland birds).

Eligible fields must have a first cut of hay anticipated. Fields where harvest is not probable are not eligible.
Fields which are less than 10 continuous acres in size are not eligible.

Other Ineligible Costs and Activities

- Normal operating costs associated with conducting or expanding a business's current operations
- Any cost that is eligible for a rebate, credit, or refund (e.g., a refundable portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax)
- Gifts and incentives
- Costs related to activities that directly influence or lobby any level of government
- Costs of basic research, ongoing activities, normal commercial expansion costs, and annual services fees of any type

- Lease of land, buildings, and facilities, or new building construction
- Costs of training and skills development that fulfill any academic requirements towards completion of a professional certificate, diploma, or degree program
- Costs of sponsorship for conferences and learning events or initiatives
- Costs of travel, hospitality, meals, and/or accommodations
- Permits and approvals
- Application or administrative fees
- Purchase or sale of land, buildings or facilities, and associated taxes or fees (e.g., land transfer tax)
- Mentoring or coaching services that do not support the development of a written plan
- Multi-use items (e.g., items that can reach beyond the scope of the project such as computers, printers, hand or power tools and attachments, etc.)
- Opportunity costs
- Irrigation systems
- Diesel/fuel costs
- Letter of Support
- Any cost not set out as an Eligible Activity and Cost and not specifically required for the execution of a project

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What You Need to Know About In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are not supported under this project category.

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How Much Cost-Share Funding Is Available?

Funding will be issued at a flat rate of $40/acre, for all eligible acres with haying delayed until after July 15 which meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Eligible Activities and Costs

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Conservation Agreements

An objective of the SARPAL program is to continue to assess the effectiveness of Conservation Agreements as a method of supporting species at risk recovery through habitat protection on private agricultural lands. Approved SARPAL applicants are required to sign a Conservation Agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada before funding is released. In the agreement, participants commit to maintain and monitor the funded BMPs for the duration of the agreement (or for the approved number of years for delayed haying projects).

Agreement duration is typically three years for all BMPs except for delayed haying. Agreement duration for delayed haying is typically one year.

A Conservation Agreement with information specific to your project will be provided via email after project approval decisions are released. You will be required to read, initial, and sign this document.

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What Do I Need to Apply?

Applications are only accepted during application intakes, which can be found above. Be sure to carefully review the program guide in its entirety – only eligible and complete applications will be considered. Make sure the following is included with the application submission:

- Certificate of completion for a 4^{th} or 5^{th} Edition Environmental Farm Plan
- Detailed site sketch based on a satellite image (e.g., using Google Maps or AgMaps) of the project location. The site sketch must show the precise location (address or GPS coordinates) and dimensions of the project. **Hand drawn sketches will not be accepted** – if you need help using GoogleMaps or AgMaps, please contact your local OSCIA Client Services Staff for assistance, click here for contact information.

- Site map(s) provided with the application must clearly label the field(s) in the application (e.g. Field 1, Field 2, and Field 3, as applicable) and must indicate the land use of fields adjacent to these fields. Land use categories to indicate could include row crops, woodlands, urban, hay, pasture, wetland, grassland.

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Documentation Required with the Application

*Site map(s) provided with the application must clearly label the field(s) in the application (e.g. Field 1, Field 2, and Field 3, as applicable) and must indicate the land use of fields adjacent to these fields. Land use categories to indicate could include: row crops, woodlands, urban, hay, pasture.

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How Do I Submit My Application?

Applications are only accepted during the intake dates noted above, and are submitted electronically through the OSCIA Portal.

If the intake is not currently accepting applications, you may still visit osciaportal.org to create a user account and enroll you farm business so you are ready for upcoming opportunities.

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Limits of the Cost-Share Funding

1. If the applicant goes ahead with the project before receiving final approval from OSCIA, they do so at the risk of forfeiting the cost-share if all terms and conditions are not satisfied.
2. OSCIA issues payments after projects have been completed and the required documentation (including a signed Conservation Agreement) is received. This means projects must be paid for in full by the applicant prior to cost-share being issued.
3. When determining the total estimated cost of the project, obtain quotes and be accurate to the best of your ability regarding figures for all applicable materials, services, equipment and in-kind contributions. Please be very clear in your cost descriptions. Gross over-estimates lead to program dollars being unnecessarily allocated and can limit opportunities for other applicants.

4. The maximum cost-share contribution per farm business is $40,000 in the 2026-2027 SARPAL program year.
5. SARPAL cost-share is available to new projects initiated on or after April 1, 2026 to December 15, 2026. No cost-share will be offered for project invoices issued before this date. To receive cost-share, all projects must be complete and operational and the complete SARPAL Claim Form received in the OSCIA Guelph office by December 15, 2026 (or, August 15, 2026, for Forage Harvest Management (delayed haying) projects). OSCIA reserves the right to perform a project inspection at a mutually agreeable time.
6. SARPAL cost-share may be utilized by eligible applicants for approved Best Management Practices on farm properties owned, rented, leased, or otherwise under their control.
7. Stacking of SARPAL contributions towards the same project by two or more farm businesses is not permissible.
8. Applicants are entirely responsible for securing all necessary approvals and permits for the proposed project before starting construction and complying with all applicable municipal bylaws and provincial or federal regulations. OSCIA will require copies of permits obtained for some projects before issuing program funding.
9. Only invoices from vendors or service providers directly engaged in the business reflected in the item or service purchased in accordance with the approved SARPAL Application will be accepted with the project claim.
10. All invoices that support materials or services provided to a project must be completed at arm's length and originate with companies or individuals not in any way associated through ownership with the farm business making the project claim. Refer to Section 251 of The Income Tax Act for the detailed statutory provision for determining Arm's Length relationships.
11. All eligible invoices must match the farm business name identified on the Enrolment Form.
12. Materials or products produced on-farm (e.g., fence posts) or purchased outside the eligible invoice dates cannot be cost-shared.
13. OSCIA reserves the right to require additional documentation and ultimately accept or reject submitted project invoices and proof of payment for cost-share consideration.
14. A single project may receive cost-share from one BMP category only. Multiple categories cannot be accessed for a single activity in efforts to maximize SARPAL contributions (i.e., cost-share will only be applied once to a project cost item).
15. Eligible projects must be new to the farm business, unless otherwise indicated in the project category description.
16. The farm business shall ensure that the total cost-share assistance from all sources, including other government or nongovernment programs, for eligible expenses shall not exceed 100 percent of project costs. The farm business is required to confirm at the time the claim is submitted all other sources of funding for eligible project expenses.
17. Across all BMP categories, HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) is not eligible for cost-share.
18. Across all BMP categories, maintenance, extended warranties, hand and power tools and attachments are not eligible for cost-share.

19. OSCIA will not accept additional SARPAL Applications after the Application Submission Deadline.
20. All applicable information on the SARPAL Application Form must be complete before it is submitted to OSCIA. Only proposed projects detailed on SARPAL Applications deemed to be complete by the OSCIA Guelph office will be considered for cost-share.
21. In order to be eligible for a SARPAL allocation, the same project cannot be funded by any other funding programs delivered by OSCIA (e.g. OFCAF) or by the Federal government. Other cost-share programs may be available from local Conservation Authorities, Ducks Unlimited Canada and other stewardship organizations.
22. OSCIA will not accept additional SARPAL applications once the total SARPAL funding available for the program year has been committed.
23. SARPAL cost-share allocation is based on the eligible project costs outlined on the approved SARPAL Application Form. Accurate estimates must be reflected in the total project costs submitted on the SARPAL Application Form. If final project costs exceed the original estimates, there is absolutely no obligation by OSCIA to extend cost-share beyond the original allocation.
24. Information presented is the best available at the time of printing. Check with OSCIA for applicable updates. Material is subject to change without notice.
25. Site preparation costs that exceed 10-times the cost of planting/seeding are not eligible.

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How Do I Submit a Claim?

If an application is approved for a cost-share allocation, written confirmation will be provided from OSCIA by email. This approval will confirm:

- If any additional information must be provided (e.g., in the case of a conditional approval)
- Any costs from the application that were deemed ineligible
- Project completion dates and claim submission deadlines
- Information on how to submit the claim
- Links to the necessary documents (e.g., Claim Form, Electronic Funds Transfer Form)

Each project must be ***complete before a claim is submitted.***

No invoices are required for Forage Harvest Management (delayed haying). **Photo(s) of the standing forage before it is cut on or after July 15, 2026, will be required with the claim**

submission.

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