

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD
CONTOUR ORCHARD AND OTHER FRUIT AREA

(acre)

CODE 331

DEFINITION

Planting orchards, vineyards, or small fruits so that all cultural operations are done on the contour.

PURPOSE

To reduce soil and water loss, to better control and use water, and to operate farm equipment more easily.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On sloping land where soil and water losses need to be controlled, especially if a permanent cover is not established.

SPECIFICATIONS GUIDE

Allowable deviation from the true contour.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Quantity

1. Effects on the water budget, especially effects on volume and rates of runoff and infiltration.

Decreases in surface runoff and increases in infiltration with any benches or terraces constructed to provide access to growing plants. Consider the type of bench or terrace (inward sloping versus outward sloping), width, degree of slope, and vegetative cover at the time of runoff.

Quality

1. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
2. Effects of increased volumes of soluble nutrients, pesticides, and salts contained in infiltrating water. Comparison should be made to noncontoured orchards on sloping ground or to the present land use if not now in orchard.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.