

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**GRAZING LAND MECHANICAL TREATMENT**

(Ac.)

**CODE 548**

**DEFINITION**

Modifying physical soil and/or plant conditions with mechanical tools by treatments such as; pitting, contour furrowing, and ripping or subsoiling.

**PURPOSE**

- Fracture compacted soil layers and improve soil permeability
- Reduce water runoff and increase infiltration
- Break up sod-bound conditions and thatch to increase plant vigor
- Renovate and stimulate plant community for greater productivity and yield

**CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES**

This standard may be applied on pastureland, rangeland, grazed forest, and native pastures.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

Mechanical treatments such as contour furrowing, pitting, ripping or subsoiling shall be designed and applied in a manner to accomplish the desired objectives and address the natural resource concerns. These treatments shall be limited to soils and slopes where surface disturbances will not result in unacceptable levels of soil erosion and/or sedimentation.

Areas to be treated shall be relatively free of undesirable or noxious plants that are likely to increase because of surface disturbance.

If natural plant community is desired, desirable forage species shall be of sufficient quantity and

have a distribution pattern that allows the plants to take advantage of the improved moisture and to spread into disturbed areas.

Adequate rest from grazing shall be applied to ensure desired plant responses from this treatment.

All work performed under this standard shall comply with State, Federal, and local laws and regulations.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

All treatments should be planned on the contour when conditions warrant.

Mechanical treatment may not be desirable on areas to be used for recreation due to increased surface roughness.

Investigate for tile etc. prior to work.

Consider the potential for disturbing buried or obscured cultural resources.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for installation of Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment shall be prepared for each site or planning unit according to the criteria. Specifications shall be recorded using state developed specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in conservation plans, or other acceptable documents.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The desired conditions (plant community shift and soil health) this practice is intended to facilitate are achieved in combination with sound grazing management. A Prescribed Grazing plan serves as the operation and maintenance plan.

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