

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

STRIPCROPPING, FIELD

(acre)
CODE 586

DEFINITION

Growing crops in a systematic arrangement of strips or bands across the general slope (not on the contour) to reduce water erosion. The crops are arranged so that a strip of grass or a close-growing crop is alternated with a clean-tilled crop or fallow.

PURPOSE

To help control erosion and runoff on sloping cropland where contour stripcropping is not practical and to improve or maintain water quality.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On sloping cropland and on certain recreation and wildlife land.

CRITERIA

The boundaries of the strips shall follow guidelines laid out across the general slope of the field.

Table 1

Land Slope (%)	Max Strip Width (feet) **	Max Slope Length (feet)
1 to 2	130	400
3 to 5	100	300
6 to 8	100	200
9 to 12	60	120
13 to 16	40	80

** Note: While strip widths in excess of 100 feet are permissible in some situations, it is usually desirable to maintain widths of 100 feet or less.

Strip widths will be in accordance with the recommendations of the professional laying out the strips taking into consideration the soil, topography, crops to be grown, cropping systems, farm machinery size and other conservation practices applied or to be applied. Table 1 shall be used as a guide in determining maximum strip widths.

When graded strips are laid out to remove excess water, it shall be disposed of in a grassed waterway, constructed outlet, or protected area. Generally, water should not be conducted along graded rows for a distance greater than 500 feet.

Crops shall be arranged so that there are alternate strips of row and close sown crops or grass. Planting and cultivation of crops shall be parallel to the guidelines.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Consider the effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground-water recharge.
2. Consider the variability of practice's effects caused by seasonal weather variations.
3. Consider the potential for a change in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.
4. Consider the filtering effects of vegetation on movement of sediment and dissolved and sediment-attached substances when deciding on row direction across the slope.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service. New Hampshire supplement is underlined.

5. Consider the effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
6. Consider the potential for development of seeps or other problems resulting from increased infiltration near restrictive layers
7. Consider the effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources due to sedimentation.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for Field Stripcropping shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose. Plans and specifications shall include construction plans, drawings, job sheets or other similar documents.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan shall be prepared for and reviewed with the landowner or operator. This plan shall specify that the treated areas and associated practices are inspected after significant storm events and repairs made as needed.