

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.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On sloping cropland and on certain recreation land and wildlife land.

**CRITERIA**

Keep the clean-tilled crop or fallow strip the same width across the field in order to avoid point rows. The width of the grass or a close-growing crop strip can be adjusted to accomplish this.

The width of the clean-tilled strip shall be adjusted to fit the size of the planting and harvesting equipment.

The Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) will be used to determine the effectiveness of field stripcropping.

The Practice Factor ("P") will be calculated from the respective "P" value table(s) in Chapter 6 of the Florida Agronomy Field Handbook.

Field stripcropping shall be used in conjunction with other conservation practices (diversions, field borders, crop residue use and conservation tillage) for more effective erosion control.

Strip lines will be laid out across the general slope of the field.

All planting and tillage operations will be parallel to the grass or close-growing crop strips.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

**Water Quantity**

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.
2. Variability of practice's effects caused by seasonal weather variations.
3. Potential for a change in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.

**Water Quality**

1. Filtering effects of vegetation on movement of sediment and dissolved and/or sediment-attached substances.
2. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.

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

3. Potential for development of saline seeps or other salinity problems resulting from increased infiltration near restrictive layers.
4. Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources.

### PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications are to be prepared for each field or treatment unit according to the criteria, considerations, and operations and maintenance described in this standard.

Specifications shall be recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

Width of Strip:

Percent Slope <sup>1</sup>	Max. Width of Clean-Tilled Crop or Fallow Strip	Min. Width of Grass or a Close-Growing Crop Strip
1 to 2	150 feet	20 feet
3 to 8	100 feet	25 feet
9 to 16	80 feet	30 feet

<sup>1</sup>As each new strip is laid out, measure the land slope from the lower edge of the previous strip.

#### Grass or a Close-Growing Crop:

Any of the adapted pasture grasses, with or without legumes, may be used for strips. In addition, small grain or other close-growing crops may be used if they provide a good cover when the cultivated area is most susceptible to erosion. See Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Pasture and Hayland Planting, Code 512, or the Florida Agronomy Field Handbook for recommended species, seeding rates, and fertility recommendations.

### OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain a good cover in the strip by periodically applying lime and fertilizer according to soil tests and needs of the crop. Apply according to Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Nutrient Management, Code 590. Weeds should be controlled by mowing or application of approved herbicides. If herbicides are used, read and follow all label warnings and directions. Apply herbicides and/or pesticides according to Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Pest Management, Code 595A. Timing of mowing or herbicide applications should be based on wildlife considerations.

Avoid soil build-up at the up-slope edge of the grass or close-growing crop strip due to tillage or sedimentation. Avoid creation of furrows that will channel water down the side of the grass or close-growing crop strip rather than through the grass or close-growing crop strip.

### REFERENCES

NRCS Conservation Practice Standards

Nutrient Management, Code 590

Pest Management, Code 595A

Pasture and Hayland Planting, Code 512

Florida Agronomy Field Handbook  
Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation