



The Contour Farming layout is maintained by approved permanent markers which are established along contour lines. These markers may consist of strips of permanent vegetative cover (referred to as correction strips), hedgerows, fence lines, access lanes, terraces, and etc.

Stable Outlets

All runoff from contouring systems shall flow on to stable outlets. Stable outlets include grassed waterways, terraces, diversions, sediment basins, field borders, filter strips and other similar measures.

Considerations

Landowners may want to consider the possibility of removing obstructions in the fields or changing field boundaries prior to installing contour strip systems. This will create a more effective system and will improve the farm equipment operation and efficiency. (Special attention should be given to *not remove* critical wildlife habitat.)

Additional planning and considerations should be given to establishing any permanent vegetative strips to grasses and/or legume species or mixes to encourage or enhance desired wildlife species and their needs.

Any correction strips that are needed and planned for hay should be wide enough to accommodate harvesting equipment.

In areas of concentrated flow or defined drainage patterns, waterways or other conveyances may be needed to prevent erosion.

Field borders and/or filter strips should be considered at the end of the strips and at the lower edge to receive and handle any diverted surface runoff. These areas should be planned or permanent vegetation for use as hay or wildlife habitat.

Contour Farming and Where It Applies

Contour farming is performing soil preparation, crop planting, and cultivation activities across a field slope as close to the contour as possible. The conservation practice of contouring is most effective for reducing soil erosion on uniform slopes ranging between two and eight percent, and where conventional planting practices are followed.

Purpose and Benefits

Contouring can be a low cost, low maintenance conservation practice that basically requires only an established pattern for equipment travel. Sheet and rill erosion is reduced significantly, and in most cases soil loss can be cut by as much as 50 percent where contouring is the only conservation practice used.

Contour Farming Requirements

To achieve a substantial reduction in soil loss, at least 90 percent of the crop area have rows within a maximum grade of 1.5 percent on field slopes of 3 percent or more. Row grades cannot exceed an amount equal to one-half of the field slope percent when field slopes are less than three percent. NOTE: Row grade percent or field slope percent refers to the vertical change in feet for every 100 feet of horizontal distance.

Permanent vegetative strips may be considered as well through the field to permit readjustment of row layout. This may be necessary on ridge tops or irregular slopes to realign row patterns to accommodate farm equipment for planting, tillage, and harvesting.

Additional conservation practices may need to be used in combination with the contour farming practice to meet the goals of the conservation management system.

Operation and Maintenance

Conduct all cultural operations parallel to established row markers or to existing markers, provided the applicable row grade criteria are met.

Adequately maintain all existing and/or newly established markers in accordance with original system layout to facilitate the continuation of the contour farming system.

Width and alignment of permanent correction strips will be maintained in accordance with original design and layout. Strips shall be maintained in a vigorous and dense growth of acceptable cover. Have soil tested at least once every three years and apply needed lime and fertilizer.

Control weeds and woody growth on vegetated correction strips by appropriate methods. For wildlife benefits, do not mow during the nesting season (April 1 - August 15). **NOTE:** Removal of the cut material by haying, etc., will enhance wildlife habitat. Do not leave a stubble height of less than 8 inches when cutting native warm season grasses.

Monitor the contour farming system on a continuous basis and inspect for row breakovers and/or excessive scouring along row furrows. **NOTE:** Measures should be taken to correct any problems detected as soon as feasible and practical.

Maintain diversions or terraces, installed in conjunction with a contour farming system, in accordance with their respective original design, layout and construction.

Periodically inspect, and adequately maintain grassed waterways, field borders, filter strips, turn strips, or other measures used to receive and convey runoff from the field; and/or used to facilitate equipment operation.

Contour Layout

Landowner _____ Tract # _____ Field # _____

Planned Rotation _____

Sketch of Contour Farming System

Plant Materials Information

Seeding Date	Est. Acres	Species	Seeding Rate lbs/acre ^{1/}	Total Seed lbs.	Lime tons/acre ^{2/}	Totals
					Fertilizer lbs/acre ^{2/}	
					N	
					P	
					K	

1/ Pure Live Seed

2/ Rates based on current soil test

Correction Strip Establishment (If Applicable)

Site Preparation

Prepare a weed-free, firm seedbed. Apply required lime and fertilizer (in accordance with a current soil test) at time of seedbed preparation, and incorporate into the top three to six inches of soil.

Planting Methods

Drill grass and/or legume specie or mixes _____ inches deep uniformly over the area. May include small grain or a summer annual as a nurse crop at the rate of _____ pounds per acre. Note: Clip or harvest the nurse crop before it has an adverse effect on the growth of the permanent species.