

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD  
GRAZING LAND MECHANICAL TREATMENT**

(Acre)

**CODE 548**

**DEFINITION**

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

**PURPOSES**

This practice should be applied as part of a conservation management system to support one or more of the following purposes:

1. Fracture compacted soil layers and improve soil permeability.
2. Reduce water runoff and increase infiltration.
3. Break up sod bound conditions and thatch to increase plant vigor.
4. Renovate and stimulate plant community for greater productivity and yield.
5. Reduce nutrient runoff and increase infiltration of animal wastes.

**CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES**

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

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable For All The Purposes Stated Above.**

Mechanical treatments such as chiseling, ripping, aerating, or plugging will be designed and applied in a manner to accomplish the desired objectives and address the natural

resource concerns. These treatments will 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 will be relatively free of undesirable or noxious plants that are likely to increase because of surface disturbance.

Desirable forage species will 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 will be applied to ensure desired plant responses from this treatment. Guidance on rest periods is found in the Prescribed Grazing practice standard.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Range Planting, Pasture and Hay Planting, Prescribed Grazing, Pest Management, and Nutrient Management may be used in conjunction with Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment.

Mechanical treatment may not be desirable on areas to be used for recreation due to enhanced surface roughness of the site.

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

Follow NRCS policy on cultural resources.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for installation of Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment will be prepared for each site or planning unit according to the criteria and operation and maintenance of this standard. Specifications shall be recorded

using state developed specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in conservation plans, or other acceptable documents.

#### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Implementation of a good prescribed grazing plan will assist in the long term operation and

maintenance of this practice. If the desired effects of this practice are lost over time, the practice should be reapplied.

Surface disturbance may cause undesirable weeds to germinate. This may require pest management by timely application of herbicides, mowing, or flash grazing (in special situations).