

# Contour Farming

## Conservation Practice Job Sheet

330

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

### INFORMATION ON THIS JOB SHEET IS CONSIDERED TO BE PART OF THE CONTRACT AND/OR CONSERVATION PLAN.

This Contour Farming Job Sheet will be used in laying out the key contour line(s) for each field(s) that the practice is being implemented in as part of a conservation plan.

### Condition Where Practice Applies

This practice applies on sloping land where annual crops are grown.

### How to lay out the key contour line

A hand level, clinometer or a contour gauge, and wire flags are the tools needed to lay out contour lines. Use the following procedure to lay out contour lines:

- Face a helper on level ground. Look through the hand level and find a spot on the helper that's the same height as your eye level.
- Go to the top of the hill or saddle between hills on the slope. Walk downhill to a point that is slightly above the midpoint of the slope and place a flag in the ground. Have the helper stand on the flag.  
Walk about 50 feet around the hill. Turn around and take a few steps up or down the hill as necessary to get a level line of sight on the helper. Then take a half step down the hill and place a flag in the ground. The half step off level will provide for row drainage. Row grade should be at least 0.5 %. **NOTE: if the purpose of the practice is to increase water infiltration then the row grade cannot exceed 0.2%!**
- The helper should then stand on the newest flag. Repeat the previous procedure until you reach the field border. To save flags, the helper could pull every other flag, leaving flags spaced every 100 feet.



- Return to the beginning point on the slope and repeat the procedure in the opposite direction until you reach the other field border.
- Follow the key contour with a pickup or tractor to make sure there are no curves too sharp to maneuver with machinery. Make slight adjustments to one or more marker flags if a curve is too tight to be practically traversed with farm equipment.

### Maintaining the practice

To avoid having to lay out a key contour line every year a good idea is to establish a permanent strip of grass along the key contour line. Contour markers may also be field boundaries, a crop row left untilled near or on an original contour baseline or another readily identifiable, continuous lasting marker.

Farming operations should begin on the key contour line with subsequent passes both up and down the slope in a parallel pattern until patterns meet. Where field operations begin to converge between two non-parallel key contour lines, establish a correction area that is in sod or an annual close-grown crop.

**If conservation cover is being established under a program, follow management requirements as outlined on the program specific operation and maintenance job sheets or as outlined in the Addition Information Section located at the end of this document.**

**Contour Farming - KY Job Sheet**

Participant Name:	Date:
Tract #:	Laid out by:
Field(s):	

<b>Purpose(s)</b> (Check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce sheet and rill erosion	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce transport of sediment, other solids and the contaminants attached to them
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase water infiltration	

Field	Field Slope (%)	Crop Rotation	In-Row Grade for the Key Contour Line (%)	Maximum In-Row Grade for Contour (%)

**Additional Information:**

*Program specific requirements or additional technical recommendations that may apply are as follows:*

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