United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Cross Wind Trap Strips (589)

Cross wind trap strips provide a cover of erosion-resistant herbaceous plants established in one or more strips typically perpendicular to the most erosive wind events.

Practice Information

Cross wind trap strips are strips of grass or other herbaceous cover established to provide protection to crops from wind-borne soil.

Conservation benefits include, but are not limited to:

- protection of growing crops from damage by wind-borne soil particles,
- reduced airborne particulate matter (dust),
- reduced soil erosion from wind,
- improved wildlife habitat.

After establishment, perennial trap strips may need to be fertilized to maintain plant vigor. Noxious weeds must be controlled.

Trap strips need to be mowed, grazed, or otherwise managed so that the vegetation attains the planned height before expected periods of wind erosion, when crop damage is likely to occur. Over time, wind-borne sediment accumulated in trap strips may need to be removed and redistributed over the surface of the field.

Every few years, depending on the soil, crops grown, and frequency of high wind events, trap strips need to be reestablished or relocated to maintain the desired plant density and height.

Common Associated Practices

Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C) are commonly associated with conservation practices such as Conservation Cropping Rotation (328); Cover Crop (340); Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329); Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345); Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645); and Herbaceous Weed Control (315).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.