United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Surface Roughening (609)

Surface roughening is performing tillage operations that create random roughness of the soil surface.

Practice Information

Surface roughening is applicable on soils that have a surface layer suitable for clod formation and a high potential for wind erosion due to lack of surface cover. However, this practice is not intended for use as a primary erosion control practice.

Random roughness is non-oriented surface roughness often referred to as “cloddiness.” Such roughness is usually created by the action of tillage implements. The primary effects of random roughness are to raise the threshold wind speed at which erosion begins and to provide sheltered areas among soil clods where moving soil particles can be trapped.

Common Associated Practices

Surface Roughening (609) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as

Conservation Crop Rotation (328); Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329); Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345); Cross Wind Ridges (588); Cross Wind Trap Strips (589C); Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603); and Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment or Renovation (380, 650).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.