

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
 PACIFIC BASIN AREA  
 CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

**CONTOUR STRIPCROPPING**

(Hectare, Acre)  
 CODE 585

**DEFINITION**

Growing crops in a systematic arrangement of strips or bands on the contour to reduce water erosion. The crops are arranged so that a strip of grass or close-growing crop is alternated with a strip of clean-tilled crop or fallow or a strip of grass is alternated with a close-growing crop.

**PURPOSE**

To reduce erosion and control water.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On sloping cropland and on certain recreation and wildlife land where the topography is uniform enough to permit tilling and harvesting, and where it is an essential part of a cropping system to effectively reduce soil and water losses.

**CRITERIA**

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation and ground water recharge.

Variability of effects caused by seasonal weather variations.

Potential for a change in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water.

Filtering effects of vegetation on movement of sediment and dissolved and sediment-attached substances.

Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances that could be carried by runoff.

Potential for development of saline seeps or other salinity problems resulting from increased infiltration near restrictive layers.

Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specify width of strip, based on percentage of slope, and allowable deviation from the contour or specified grade and row length. Specifications shall be based on approved erosion prediction technology.

**OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

Conservation Practice Standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this Standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.