United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Conservation Crop Rotation (328)

Conservation crop rotation is growing a planned sequence of various crops on the same piece of land for a variety of conservation purposes.

Practice Information

Crops included in conservation crop rotation include high-residue producing crops such as corn or wheat in rotation with low-residue-producing crops such as vegetables or soybeans. The rotation may also involve growing forage crops in rotation with other field crops.

Crop rotations vary with soil type, crops produced, farming operations, and how the crop residue is managed. The most effective crops for soil improvement are fibrous-rooted high-residue producing crops such as grass and small grain.

Perennial plants used for forage are very effective in crop rotations due to increases in organic matter and reduced soil erosion. In addition, crop rotations help break insect, disease, and weed cycles. Rotations add diversity to farm operations and often reduce economic and environmental risks.

Common Associated Practices

Conservation Crop Rotation (328) is commonly applied with practices such as Contour Farming (330), Cover Crops (340), Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329), Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345), and Terraces (600).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.