



Contour Farming

Conservation Practice Job Sheet

(Code 330)

For:	Farm #:
Field(s):	Tract #:

Definition

Tillage, planting, and other farming operations performed on or near the contour of the field slope.

Purposes (check all that apply)

- To reduce sheet and rill erosion.
- To reduce transport of sediment and other water-borne contaminants.

Condition where practice applies

This practice applies on sloping land where crops are grown. Contour farming is most effective on slopes between 2 and 10 percent. This practice will be less effective in achieving the stated purpose(s) on slopes exceeding 10 percent and in

areas with 10-year-frequency, single storm EI values greater than 140 (EI = total storm energy times the maximum 30-minute intensity). The practice is not well suited to rolling topography having a high degree of slope irregularity because of the difficulty meeting row grade criteria.



Baseline(s): A baseline is the contour line(s) laid out in the field to establish tillage and planted row patterns. Assistance to establish the baseline(s) will be provided by the NRCS/SWCD local field office. Once established maintain the baseline(s). A narrow strip of grass (1-5 feet wide) or markers will help to maintain the baseline(s).

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Maximum In-Row Grade(s)

Field(s)	Maximum In-Row Grade for Contour

Headland, End Rows, Field Edges

Headlands or end rows that are steeper than the maximum row grade criteria stated above shall have a cover-management condition no greater than 3 or established to permanent field borders.

Operation and Maintenance

1. Perform all tillage and planting operations parallel to contour baselines or *terraces, diversions, or contour buffer strip* boundaries where these practices are used, provided the applicable row grade criteria are met.
2. Where *terraces, diversions, or contour buffer strips* are not present, maintain contour markers on grades that, when followed during establishment of each crop, will maintain crop rows at designed grades. Contour markers may be field boundaries, a crop row left untilled near or on an original contour baseline, or other readily identifiable, continuous, lasting marker. All tillage and planting operations shall be parallel to the established marker. If a marker is lost, re-establish a contour baseline within the applicable criteria set forth by this standard prior to seedbed preparation for the next crop.
3. Farming operations should begin on the contour baselines and proceed both up and down the slope in a parallel pattern until patterns meet. Where field operations begin to converge between two non-parallel contour baselines, establish a correction area that is either permanently in sod, established to an annual close-grown crop, or is in cover-management condition 3.
4. Where contour row curvature becomes too sharp to keep machinery aligned with rows during field operations, establish sod turn strips on sharp ridge points or other odd areas as needed.
5. Renovate *field borders* as needed to maintain at least 65 percent ground cover. Maintain adequate field border width to allow farm implements room to turn.

Questions concerning these specifications and/or crop substitutions should be directed to the NRCS/SWCD office (phone)

Practice Checkout:

Amount completed: _____ units	Mark as-built location on plan map and attach photos.
Remarks: _____	
This practice meets NRCS standards and specifications <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Check out completed by: _____ Date: _____	
Certified by: _____ Date: _____	