

DEEP TILLAGE

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service – Practice Code 324



DEEP TILLAGE

Deep tillage means performing tillage operations below the normal tillage depth to modify the physical or chemical properties of a soil. It includes tillage operations commonly referred to as deep plowing, subsoiling, ripping, or row-till, performed from time to time below the normal tillage depth.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

Deep tillage is conducted on land having adverse soil conditions that inhibit plant growth, such as compacted layers formed by field operations, restrictive layers such as claypans, overwash, or deposits from wind and water erosion or flooding, or contaminants in the root zone.

The soil moisture content is very important factor to consider when performing deep tillage operations. Soil moisture should be

less than 30 percent of field capacity at the maximum depth of tillage.

COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Transport of sediment-borne pollutants off-site can be reduced when this practice is used in a Conservation Management System. On cropland, deep tillage is commonly used with Conservation Crop Rotation, Residue Management, Contour Farming, Irrigation Water Management, Cover Crops, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, and other conservation practices. On grazing lands, deep tillage may be used with Prescribed Grazing and other pasture management practices.

Refer to the practice standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide and associated Job Sheets for further information.

The following page identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.