

## Stripcropping (to control erosion by water)

Stripcropping is growing of crops, forages, small grains, or fallow in a systematic arrangement of equal width strips across a field.

### Benefits

- Stripcropping provides low cost erosion control.
- Grass strips or those with close growing vegetation provide cover, slow runoff, increase infiltration, and trap sediment.
- Stripcropping facilitates maintenance of the contour farming pattern.
- The rotation of strips helps to break insect, disease and weed cycles.
- The sod and high residue crops add organic matter and improve soil quality.
- The strips provide diverse habitat for wildlife.

### Considerations for the Practice

- As a minimum, the slope gradient must be oriented across the field slope in accordance with the specifications. However, strips on the contour provide erosion control and filtering benefits.
- Make sure that the crop rotation and acres of each crop will allow for alternating of row crops in the system with either perennial grasses and legumes or close growing crops.
- No more than one half of the field can be in conventionally tilled row crops at any time.
- Beware of herbicide carryover when crops are alternated.
- Avoid herbicide drift from adjacent strips.
- Specified strip widths depend on the field slope and machinery widths. The specified strip widths may be adjusted downward to accommodate changes in equipment.
- Typically each strip should be the same width. However, sod or close growing crops can be planted in odd areas or uneven strips to keep the pattern on the contour.
- Leave grass turn strips where turns become sharp.

## South Carolina Conservation Practice Job Sheet for Stripcropping to control water erosion



**Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service**  
*Columbia, S.C.  
May 2003*

### Operation and Maintenance

- Conduct all farming operations parallel to the strip boundaries.
- Care should be taken to maintain strip widths. If grass/legume crops fail, the strips should be rotated and a grass/legume or close growing crop planted in the alternate strips.
- Use care in applying pesticide and operating tillage equipment to avoid damage to the crop/cover in the adjacent strips.
- Fertilize sod strips, field borders and grassed waterways as needed to maintain stand.
- Mow sod turn strips, field borders and waterways at least annually. If wildlife enhancement is desired, mowing should be outside the primary nesting season (i.e. mow between October 1 and March 31).
- Redistribute sediment accumulations along the upslope edge of the strips as needed to maintain uniform sheet flow.
- Renovate vegetated headlands or end row area as needed to keep ground cover above 65 percent.



## Stripcropping Specifications

<b>Tract Number</b>		<b>Field Number</b>	
---------------------	--	---------------------	--

<b>Equipment (type) -&gt;</b>		<b>Width -&gt;</b>		<b>No. of Passes/strip -&gt;</b>	
<b>Equipment (type) -&gt;</b>		<b>Width-&gt;</b>		<b>No. of Passes/strip -&gt;</b>	
<b>Equipment (type) -&gt;</b>		<b>Width-&gt;</b>		<b>No. of Passes/strip -&gt;</b>	

<b>Strip Width -&gt;</b>	<b>A</b>		<b>B</b>		<b>C</b>	
--------------------------	----------	--	----------	--	----------	--

Set of Strips	Rotation of Crops in Strips	Management of Vegetation
<b>A</b>		
<b>B</b>		
<b>C</b>		

### Map or Sketch of Field