

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING RIDGE HEIGHTS FOR  
CONTOURING WITH RUSLE

Select the ridge height that best describes the condition during the one-fourth of the year when rainfall and runoff are most erosive and the soil is most susceptible to erosion. The primary selection criteria should be the height of the ridge. However, row spacing, residue orientation, and rainfall intensity relative to the time of year can modify effective ridge height and should also be considered.

1. VERY LOW (0.5 - 2 inches) RIDGES
  - Plants not closely spaced (<5000 plants per acre)
  - No-till planted row crops
  - Fields that have been rolled, pressed or dragged after planting
  - Conventionally drilled crops when erosive rains occur during or soon after planting
2. LOW (2 - 3 inches) RIDGES
  - No-till drilled crops
  - Mulch tilled row crops
  - Conventionally planted row crops with no row cultivation
  - Conventionally drilled crops when erosive rains are uniformly distributed throughout the year
  - Transplanted crops, widely spaced (>30 inches with <10,000 plants per acre)
3. MODERATE (3 - 4 inches) RIDGES
  - Conventionally (clean) tilled row crops with row cultivation
  - Winter small grain when erosive rains are concentrated in the late spring after plants have developed a stiff, upright stem
  - Transplanted crops that are closely spaced and/or in narrow rows (<30 inches with >10,000 plants per acre)
4. HIGH (4 - 6 inches) RIDGES
  - Ridge tilled crops with high (4-6") ridges during periods of erosive rain
  - Hipping, bedding or ridging with high (4-6") ridges during periods of erosive rains
5. VERY HIGH (> 6 inches) RIDGES
  - Ridge tilled crops with very high (>6") ridges during periods of erosive rains
  - Hipping, bedding or ridging with very high (>6") ridges during periods of erosive rains