



CONTOUR FARMING

Contour farming is using ridges and furrows formed by tillage, planting and other farming operations to reduce velocity and change the direction of runoff from directly downslope to around the hillslope.



PURPOSE

Conservation benefits may include, but are not limited to:

- Reduced sheet and rill erosion
- Reduced transport of sediment, other solids and the contaminants attached to them
- Reduce transportation of contaminants found in solution runoff
- Increase water infiltration

PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Contour farming is most effective on uniform slopes between 2 and 10 percent.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Perform all tillage and planting operations parallel to contour baselines, terraces, diversions, or contour buffer strip boundaries where these practices are used, provided the applicable row grade criteria are met.

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.

Farming operations should begin on the contour baselines and proceed both up and down the slope in a parallel pattern until patterns meet. 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. Corrective strips where baselines are re-established should be left in permanent sod as well.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for establishment and operation of this practice shall be prepared for each field according to the Criteria, Operation and Maintenance described in this standard. The plans shall include:

- percent slope and slope length used for conservation planning for each contour system
- the minimum and maximum allowable row grades for the contour system (documentation used to make that decision)
- a sketch (plan map) and photograph of the field showing:
- the approximate location of the keyline(s) used to establish the system,
- the location of stable outlets
- the location of all planned or existing supporting conservation practices needed to control surface water runoff.

CONTOUR FARMING - IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Producer: _____

Location: _____ Tract Number: _____

Practice Location Map

(showing detailed aerial view of where practice is to be installed on farm/site, showing all major components, stationing, relative location to any landmarks, and survey benchmarks)

On the map, delineate the contour baseline(s), correction areas, and stable outlets for concentrated flow.

CONTOUR FARMING - IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Practice Purpose(s):

- Reduce sheet and rill erosion
- Reduce transport of sediment, other solids and the containments attached to them
- Reduce transport of containments found in solution runoff
- Increase water infiltration

Site Planning Conditions for the Dominant Critical Soil Map Unit/Component			
Planning Map Unit/ Component	Planning Slope %	Planning Slope Length (ft.)	Percent Absolute Contour Row Grade Planned

Maximum and Minimum Contour Row Grades	
<p>Minimum Contour Row Grade (Percent)</p> <p>The crop rows shall have sufficient grade to ensure that runoff water does not pond and cause unacceptable crop damage.</p>	<p>Maximum Contour Row Grade (Percent)</p> <p>The maximum row grade shall not exceed: (a) 1/2 of the up-and-down hill-slope percent used for conservation planning, or (b) 4%, whichever is less. Up to a 25% deviation from the design row grade is permitted within 150 feet of a stable outlet.</p>

Minimum Ridge Heights and In-Row Plant Spacing		
Row spacing greater than 10-inches	Row spacing 10-inches or less	Minimum of 50% residue on the surface after planting
<p>The minimum ridge height shall be <u>2-inches</u> during the period of the rotation that is most vulnerable to sheet and rill erosion (RUSLE2).</p>	<p>The minimum ridge height shall be <u>1-inch</u> for close grown crops, such as small grains. Plant height shall be <u>at least 6-inches</u> high and the spacing between plants within the row shall not be greater than <u>2-inches</u> during the time most vulnerable to sheet and rill erosion.</p>	<p>No minimum ridge height</p>

CONTOUR FARMING - IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Operation and Maintenance:

- 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.
- 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 designated 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, reestablish a contour baseline within the applicable criteria set forth by this standard prior to seedbed preparation for the next crop.
- Farming operations should begin on the contour baselines and precede 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 either is permanently in sold, established to an annual close-grown crop.
- Where contour row curvatures 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.

COST SHARE DOCUMENTATION FOR CASE FILE

Before payment is made, the following information is required to be in the case file:

- Plan or location map, or photograph of the field and documentation of practice layout according to plans and specifications is present in the client case file and include the following:
 - » the approximate location of the keyline(s) used to establish the system with design minimum and maximum row grade,
 - » the location of stable outlets and outlets needing treatment identified during the design of the contour farming system, and
 - » the location of all existing or planned supporting conservation practices needed to control surface water runoff.
- Field verification is documented and a certified planner verified “as installed” this practice meets NRCS standards and specifications.

Practice Certification (NRCS USE ONLY)

I certify that the practice as installed is complete and meets the applicable Wisconsin NRCS Conservation Practice Standard and all applicable practice specifications. Any changes to the original practice design have been approved and are documented on the original practice design “as installed.”

Certified Planner (print)

Certified Planner (sign)

Date

CONTOUR FARMING

Client Name: _____ Planner Name: _____

Practice Purpose: _____

PLANNED PRACTICE LOCATION AND EXTENT

Contract Number	Contract Identification Number (CIN)	Tract Number	Field Number(s)	Acres Contracted	Acres Planned	Actual Acres Applied (NRCS USE ONLY)

Minimum Row Grade: _____ Maximum Row Grade: _____ Percent Slope Used For Design: _____

Other Required Supporting Practices: _____