



Conservation Practice Overview

October 2020

Irrigation Field Ditch (Code 388)

A permanent irrigation ditch, constructed in or with earth materials, to convey water from the source of supply to a field or fields in an irrigation system.

Practice Information

This practice applies to open channels and elevated ditches with a capacity of 25 cubic feet per second or less. It does not apply to canals and laterals that deliver irrigation water to a farm, nor does it apply to ditches constructed for temporary use and removed during the growing season.



Irrigation field ditches are permanent installations that require design and layout to achieve acceptable stability, capacity, velocity, and water surface elevations to provide efficient application of irrigation water to the field surface. The ditch banks may be closed and reopened to accommodate harvest, tillage, and other cultural requirements of the crops produced.

Field ditches are constructed in earth material that contains enough clay or other fine soil material to prevent excessive seepage. The sealing effect of sediment carried in the irrigation water may be considered in determining site suitability for a field ditch.

An irrigation field ditch will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

Irrigation Field Ditch (388) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Irrigation Water Management (449), Irrigation Canal or Lateral (320), Irrigation Ditch Lining (428), Irrigation Pipeline (430), Pumping Plant (533), Water Well (642), Structure for Water Control (587), Sprinkler System (442) and Irrigation Systems Microirrigation (441), and Surface & Subsurface (443).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.