



Conservation Practice Overview

September 2020

Surface Drain, Field Ditch (Code 607)

This practice titled surface drain, field ditch is used for surface drainage by installing a graded ditch for collecting excess surface or subsurface water in a field.

Practice Information

The purpose of this practice is to intercept, collect and convey surface and subsurface flows to an outlet. The collected surface flows may originate from surface depressions, sheet flow from natural and graded land surfaces and channel flows from furrows.



Applicable sites are flat or nearly flat and have soils that are slowly permeable or otherwise collect water. It also applies to sites that have a shallow substrata that prevents percolation and outside areas that contribute to runoff or seepage. The site requires an adequate outlet(s) for the disposal of drainage water. This practice applies to small drainage ditches within a field, but not to main or lateral ditches or grassed waterways. Compliance with all Federal, State and local laws and regulations is required.

The practice has a minimum expected life of 15 years. The operation and maintenance of a field ditch includes; periodic inspections of the ditch especially after significant rainfall events, removal of sediment and other debris from the ditch, and other routine maintenance such as weed control as developed in the O&M plan.

Common Associated Practices

Conservation Practice Standard, Surface Drain, Field Ditch, Code 607, commonly applies with Conservation Practice Standards such as: Integrated Pest Management, Code 595; Nutrient Management, Code 590; Surface Drainage, Main or Lateral, Code 608; Underground Outlet, Code 620; Critical Area Planting, Code 342; and Drainage Water Management, Code 554.

For further information contact your local NRCS field office.