

## Who We Are

Inspired by a shared vision of agriculture as a valued component of the landscape, NRCS works in partnership with farmers, ranchers and many others to improve, restore and protect the Nation's natural resources.

Working side-by-side with these partners, we work to sustain and improve the quality of our soil, water, air and wildlife habitat, and we develop conservation plans that work for the land and for farmers and ranchers. Farm Bill programs help with the cost of putting conservation on the ground, which benefits the farm, the watershed and the community. Conservation easement programs, also in the Farm Bill, help to protect the agricultural and natural resource values of the land over the long-term.

With our help, Nebraska is balancing economic goals with a high quality environment—ensuring productive lands to supply food, fiber, forest and energy products for the Nation and the world.

## Compaction

With the present drought conditions in many parts of the state, the minimum moisture requirements for proper soil compaction listed in the NRCS Construction Specifications, specifically the Earthfill and Plastic Pipe Specifications (applies to all pipe types), are important considerations when installing engineering practices.

- Earthfill Specification: The fill material shall have a moisture content sufficient to secure compaction. When kneaded in the hand, it will form a ball which does not readily separate when struck sharply with a pencil and will not extrude out of the hand when squeezed tightly.
- Plastic Pipe Specification: The water content of cohesive backfill material shall be such that, kneaded in the hand, the soil will form a ball which does not readily separate. For non-cohesive sand and gravel backfill material, water content is not a concern.

If these minimum moisture requirements cannot be met by the landowner or contractor with natural soil moisture, NRCS advises to stop construction. If the landowner and contractor want to proceed with construction, NRCS will require a watering plan to be submitted, which includes the source of the water, estimated quantity of water available and equipment available to transport/spread water. It is important to remember that no amount of compacting is a substitute for the proper moisture content in the soil when trying to properly compact soil.

Some of the most common types of practices that will be impacted due to poor compaction conditions are pond dams, wetland levees, grade stabilization structures (backfill and levees), fill areas in grassed waterways, terraces, and water and sediment control basins. There are some types of practices such as macro-topography for wetlands (excavation), which may be easier to construct during a drought due to the drier soil conditions.

## Grassed Waterway Construction

Grassed waterway construction is strongly discouraged due to the current dry soil conditions. The Nebraska NRCS policy does contain provisions to evaluate the success of seeding this summer and proceed with payment if the vegetation established meets the requirements stated in the policy. The landowner is responsible for re-construction and re-planting if seeded outside of Nebraska NRCS approved seeding dates.

