USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Surface Drain, Field Ditch (607)

A surface drain, field ditch installed for surface drainage is a graded ditch for collecting excess surface or subsurface water in a field.

Practice Information

The purposes of this practice are to:

- drain surface depression;
- collect or intercept excess surface water, such as sheet flow from natural and graded land surfaces or channel flow from furrows, and carry it to an outlet;
- collect excess subsurface water and carry it to an outlet.

Applicable sites are flat or nearly flat and have soils that are slowly permeable or otherwise collect water. Adequate outlets for the disposal of drainage waters are required. This practice applies to small drainage ditches within a field, but not to main or lateral ditches or grassed waterways. Compliance with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations is required.

Sites for this practice have the following additional features:

- soils are slowly permeable or shallow with substrata that prevents percolation,
- surface depressions that trap rainfall,
- receive outside runoff or seepage,
- require removal of excess irrigation water,
- require control of the water table,
- Have adequate outlets for disposal of the drainage water.

Surface drain, field ditch will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

Surface Drain (607) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Pest Management (595); Nutrient Management (590); Surface Drainage, Main or Lateral (608); Underground Outlet (620); Critical Area Planting (342); and Drainage Water Management (554).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

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