Controlling Erosion on Highly Erodible Cropland

Conservation Compliance
Conservation Compliance

• In 1985, the Food Security Act was passed.

• This law stated that erosion must be controlled on land determined to be highly erodible.

• Highly erodible land determined to not be controlling erosion could be “out of compliance” with Food Security Act requirements.
Conservation Compliance

• If found to be out of compliance, producers are at risk of losing their Farm Bill program benefits.

• Those benefits include:
  • FSA loans and financial assistance programs.
  • NRCS and FSA conservation program benefits.
  • Federal crop insurance premium subsidies.
Conservation Compliance

• The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently completed an audit of NRCS’ highly erodible land compliance policy.

• The audit found NRCS in some states has been inconsistently applying the highly erodible land compliance policy defined in the Food Security Act.

• NRCS will now implement conservation compliance policy consistently nationwide.
Conservation Compliance

• The following conservation compliance issues will be applied more consistently:
  – The identification and required treatment of ephemeral gully erosion.
  – State-issued guidance for controlling sheet and rill, wind, and ephemeral gully erosion.
Conservation Compliance

• This could impact the way producers are currently farming.

• Fields found to have ephemeral erosion will now need to control this type of erosion, regardless if soil leaves the field, or not.
Conservation Compliance

• Ephemeral gullies are ditches that develop in fields when concentrated flow from heavy rains and runoff washes away the soil and causes a ditch to form.
Conservation Compliance

- An ephemeral gully is able to be farmed across – whereas a classic gully cannot be crossed by field equipment.

- Classic gullies are not required to be controlled.
Conservation Compliance

- NRCS conservationist will work with producers to develop a conservation plan to control ephemeral erosion.

- NRCS conservation programs (EQIP, CSP, etc.) provide funding to assist producers with installing the conservation practices in their conservation plan.
Conservation Compliance

• Conservation practices that help control erosion include:
  • Terraces
  • Waterways
  • No-till
  • Sediment Basins
  • Cover Crops
Erosion Control Conservation Practices
Conservation Compliance

• Producers won’t have to make these changes overnight. They will have until Dec. 31, 2019, to have required conservation practices in place.

• NRCS has the flexibility (variances) to work with producers to give them the opportunity to meet the highly erodible land requirements, including the control of ephemeral gully erosion.
Conservation Compliance

• Producers are encouraged to visit with the conservationists in their local NRCS office to learn more about their current conservation plan.

• If changes are found to be needed, NRCS has the expertise to help producers meet the conservation compliance policy update.
Questions?

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