



Most Common Conservation Practices - Grazing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has been around since 1996 and has seen a growth in popularity and funding. EQIP is NRCS' principal program for delivering conservation technical and financial assistance to private landowners. EQIP supports the needs of agricultural operations with or without livestock by offering ideas, solutions, and guidance for a successful and sustainable conservation operation. Practices described in program materials can be selected and installed after developing a conservation plan designed to address your specific resource concerns. For grazing operations, the following list of conservation practices are the most commonly used.



Fencing (Conservation Practice Standard 382)

Fencing is a practice that may be applied on any area where control of animal or people movement is needed. Fences are not needed where natural barriers will serve the purpose. Considerations include:

1. Improved forage quantity and quality to meet livestock demand
2. Livestock management, to include handling, location, adequate watering and feeding facilities
3. Soil erosion potential when constructing a fence on steep slopes
4. Wildlife movement needs



Livestock Pipeline (Conservation Practice Standard 516)

Pipelines are used to deliver water from a source of supply to points of use for livestock or wildlife to facilitate a prescribed grazing plan. For livestock water, the installation should have a capacity to provide seasonal high daily water requirements.



Prescribed Grazing (Conservation Practice Standard 528)

Prescribed Grazing is applied as part of a conservation system to accomplish one or more of the following:

1. Improve or maintain health and vigor of key species and maintain a stable and desired plant community
2. Provide or maintain food, cover, and shelter for wildlife and livestock
3. Maintain or improve water quality and quantity in a holistic manner
4. Reduce soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition for resource sustainability



Stream Crossing (Conservation Practice Standard 578)

A Stream Crossing consists of a stabilized area or a structure constructed across a stream to provide a travel way for people, livestock, equipment, or vehicles. This practice can:

1. Improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrient, stream loading
2. Reduce streambank and streambed erosion
3. Provide a crossing for access to other grazed lands
4. Act as an emergency only livestock water supply



Forage and Biomass Planting (Conservation Practice Standard 512)

Establishing adapted and/or compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of herbaceous species suitable for pasture, hay, or biomass production. This practice applies on lands to:

1. Improve soil and water quality and soil health
2. Improve or maintain livestock nutrition and/or health
3. Provide or increase forage supply during periods of low forage production
4. Produce feedstock for Biofuel or energy production
5. Provide other benefits to wildlife and pollinating insects



Animal Trail and Walkway (Conservation Practice Standard 575)

An animal trail and walkway is an established lane or a travel-way for animal movement and at times the occasional vehicle to manage pastures. (Use Access Road (560) practice for heavy equipment use). When constructed as part of a conservation system, the trail will:

1. Protect the soil, water, fish, wildlife, and other adjacent natural resources
2. Improve grazing distribution, efficiency and livestock health
3. Provide or improve livestock access to forage, water, & handling facilities



Brush Management (Conservation Practice Standard 314)

Brush Management includes removal, reduction, or manipulation of nonherbaceous plants. This practice helps to:

1. Manage noxious and invasive woody plants or overgrown pastures
2. Restore desired vegetative cover to protect soils, control erosion, reduce sediment improve water quality, and enhance stream flow
3. Improve forage accessibility, quality and quantity for livestock
4. Manage shrubland for grazing and shrubland bird habitat



Heavy Use Area Protection (Conservation Practice Standard 561)

The Heavy Use Area Protection stabilizes frequently and intensively used areas by livestock that require treatment to address resource concerns. Roofed livestock winter feeding stations provide a place for animals to feed during bad weather. Other heavy use areas are protected with vegetative cover or hard surface materials such as aggregate or concrete. This practice will:

1. Reduce soil erosion and compaction
2. Improve water quantity and quality
3. Improve grazing distribution
4. Improve livestock health



Watering Facility (Conservation Practice Standard 614)

A Watering Facility (tank, trough, or other watertight container) provides access to water for livestock and/or wildlife at selected locations. Watering facilities can be used on all land uses where there is a need for new or improved facilities. This facility:

1. Protects and enhances vegetative cover through proper distribution of grazing
2. Controls erosion through better grassland management
3. Protects streams and ponds from livestock contamination



Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (Conservation Practice Standard 380)

Windbreaks and Shelterbelts are linear plantings of single or multiple rows of trees or shrubs or sets of linear plantings. Mature windbreaks and shelterbelts:

1. Reduce soil erosion from wind
2. Provide shelter for structures, livestock, and recreational areas
3. Enhance wildlife habitat by providing travel corridors
4. Provide living noise screens and visual screens
5. Provide living barriers against airborne chemical drift
6. Increase carbon storage

Vermont USDA Service Centers & NRCS Offices

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