



Conservation Practice Overview

September 2020

Waterspreading (Code 640)

Waterspreading involves the use of a system of dams, dikes, ditches, or other means of diverting or collecting runoff from natural channels, gullies, or streams and spreading it over relatively flat areas.

Practice Information

The purpose of waterspreading is to supplement natural precipitation in areas where extra moisture is needed.

Waterspreading systems are suited to locations where the topography and climate are such that additional moisture can be expected to improve plant growth. Areas that receive 8 to 25 inches of precipitation are generally well suited for waterspreading if other site conditions are adequate.

The purpose of the practice is to supplement natural precipitation in areas where extra moisture is needed. Waterspreading systems apply to areas where—

- Soils have suitable permeability rates and water-holding capacity for the crops or forage to be grown on the site.
- The topography and soil are suitable for diversion, collection, and spreading of runoff water.
- Rainfall probabilities indicate runoff or streamflow is available during most years at the appropriate time and volume to significantly increase plant production.
- The system can be designed to operate without excessive erosion.
- Adverse affects on fish and wildlife will be minimal.

Waterspreading will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Waterspreading (Code 640) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Dam, Diversion (Code 348), Dike (Code 356), Open Channel (Code 582), Land Smoothing (Code 466), Critical Area Planting (Code 342), Nutrient Management (Code 590), Integrated Pest Management (Code 595), and Conservation Crop Rotation (Code 328).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.

