

# Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Compliance



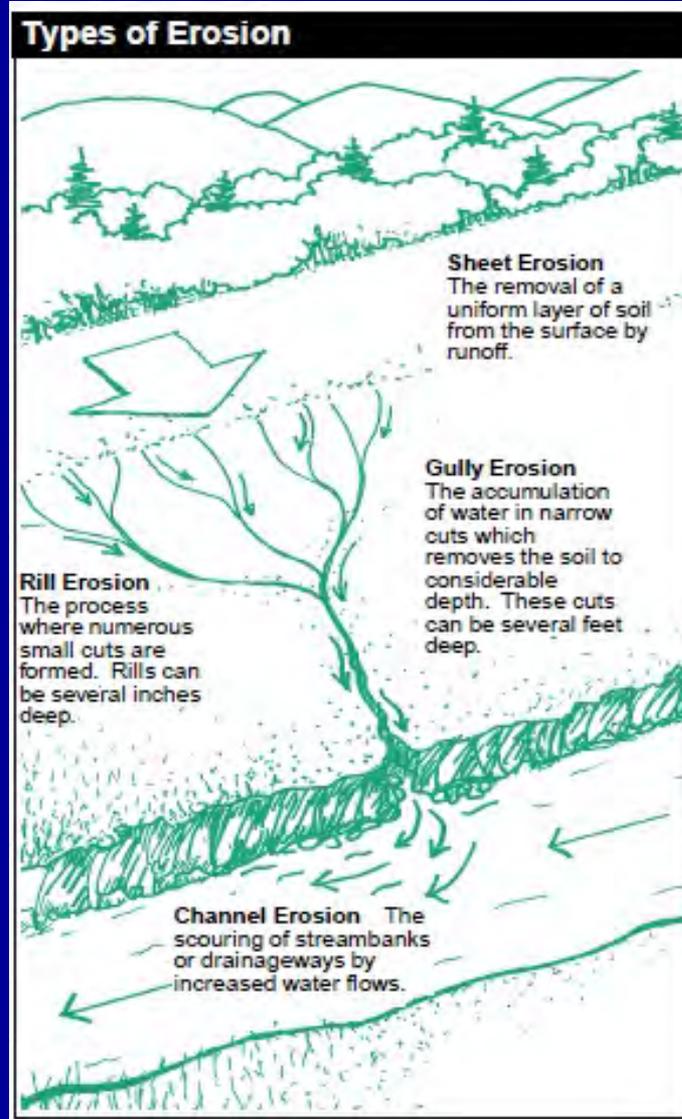
# Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Compliance

- **Began in 1985 – Food Security Act**
- **Must control erosion on HEL land to remain eligible for farm programs**
  - FSA loans and disaster assistance payments
  - NRCS and FSA conservation program benefits
  - Federal crop insurance premium subsidies (with 2014 farm bill)

# Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Compliance

- On land determined to be HEL, the following erosion must be controlled
  - Sheet and rill erosion
  - Ephemeral gully erosion
  - Wind erosion
- Does not include classic gully, streambank, or other erosion

# Types of Erosion



# Sheet and rill erosion

**Maximum soil erosion allowed for compliance depends**

- **If farmed prior to Dec. 23, 1985**
- **Or broken out and farmed after 1985**
  - **Called “sodbusting”**

# Sheet and rill erosion

If farmed prior to 1985

- Must be controlled to 2 T or less (1996 farm bill)



# Another view of Sheet and rill erosion

Must be controlled to 2 T or less  
(1996 farm bill)



# Sheet and rill erosion

If sodbusted and farmed after  
1985: **erosion must not exceed T**



# Ephemeral Gully Erosion



- **Can be smoothed / reshaped using tillage**
- **Can still cross them with equipment**
- **No “tolerable or T” limit – must be controlled**

# **Classic Gully** **not subject to HEL Compliance**



- **Cannot be reshaped using tillage**
- **Too large to cross with equipment**

# Who does NRCS check?

- **FSA provides NRCS with a random selection of tracts**
  - **For 2016: 1005 tracts**
- **Also added**
  - **Tracts identified by whistleblowers**
  - **FSA and NRCS employees**
  - **5% of FSA farm credit loan recipients**

# Questions?

