

Name of Practice: STRIP CROPPING SYSTEMS  
DCR Specifications for No. SL-3

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's strip cropping systems best management practice, that are applicable to all contracts, entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice will promote growing crops in a systematic arrangement of strips or bands across the general land slope to reduce water erosion and nutrient loss.

The purpose of this practice is to improve water quality by reducing the movement of sediment and nutrients from cultivated crop fields where other cultural and management practices alone are not adequate to reduce losses to tolerable limits.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Cost-share and tax credit are authorized on a per acre basis to cover a portion of the cost and serve as an incentive to establish a stripcropping system. In addition, a percentage rate has been established for the extra component in those systems that require obstruction removal such as fences, stonewalls, hedgerows, or gullies.
2. Cost-share and tax credit are authorized on a percentage basis for subsurface drains needed to eliminate spot seepage on 8 percent or greater slopes if the seepage makes cross-slope tillage impractical. Subsurface drains may be the sole component if spot seepage develops and makes cross-slope tillage impractical in existing stripcropping systems.
3. Nutrient Management Plan. Producers must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner. The plan must include all agricultural production acreage contained within the tract that this BMP will be implemented on and must be on file with the local SWCD. Cost-Share payments shall not be made until a current nutrient management plan is on file with the SWCD. Any nutrients applied before March 1st must be in accordance with a certified nutrient management plan.
4. On acreage devoted to row crops, one of the following must apply:
  - i. The crop stubble or residue must be left on the land during the winter.
  - ii. A winter cover crop must be established.
  - iii. Adequate protective tillage operations must be performed.
5. For contour stripcropping systems, cultural operations must be performed as nearly as practical on the contour.
6. Cost-share and tax credit are not authorized for repeating any approved measures under this practice with the same person on the same acreage. This is a one-time incentive.
7. Soil loss rates must be computed for all applications for use in establishing priority considerations.

8. This practice is subject to NRCS Standard 585 Contour Strip Cropping.
9. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. If subsurface drains are installed as the sole component as provided for in subparagraph 2, the strip cropping system and subsurface drains shall be maintained for at least 10 years following the calendar year in which the drains were installed. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the SWCD throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. An incentive rate of \$30 per acre has been established for all acreage within the field. A 75 % add on cost-share rate has been established for components in those systems that require obstruction removal or subsurface drainage. Multiplying \$30 per acre times the field acreage and adding 75 % of the obstruction removal and/or subsurface drainage cost will compute the final amount. The state cost-share payment, alone or when combined with any other cost-share program will not exceed 75 percent of the total eligible costs. Cost-share is authorized for operations not receiving cost-share payments from other sources for the same practice components (i.e. flat rate, tile, or obstruction removal) on the same acreage.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code § 58.1-339.3 and §58.1-439.5, Virginia law currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain BMP practices. The current tax credit rate, which is subject to change in accordance with the Code of Virginia, is 25% of the total eligible cost not to exceed \$17,500.00.
3. If a cooperator receives cost-share, only the cooperator's eligible out-of-pocket share of the project cost is used to determine the tax credit.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and SWCD staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above, and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA), for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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