United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

September 2016

Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (Code 329)

The residue and tillage management, no till practice addresses the amount, orientation, and distribution of crop and other plant residue on the soil surface year-round. Crops are planted and grown in narrow slots or tilled strips established in the untilled seedbed of the previous crop.

Practice Information

This practice includes maintaining most of the crop residue on the soil surface throughout the year, commonly referred to as no till. The common characteristic of this practice is that the only tillage performed is a very narrow strip prepared by coulters, sweeps, or similar devices attached to the front of the planter.

Benefits to soil include increasing organic matter, improving soil tilth, and increasing productivity as the constant supply of organic material left on the soil surface is decomposed by a healthy population of earthworms and other organisms.

Operations and maintenance for this practice includes evaluating the crop-residue cover and orientation for each crop to ensure the planned amounts, orientation, and benefits are being achieved. Weeds and other pests must be monitored to ensure pest populations do not exceed thresholds.

Common Associated Practices

Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (Code 329) is commonly applied with practices such as Conservation Crop Rotation (Code 328), Nutrient Management (Code 590), Integrated Pest Management (Code 595), and Irrigation Water Management (Code 449).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.