

Conservation Practices for Sweet Potato Production in North Carolina

There are a number of conservation practices available in North Carolina that can have value in sweet potato production. Used in combination with integrated pest management (595), one or more of these practices will improve the overall conservation benefits achieved on a grower's operation and also increase the likelihood that a grower's application will be ranked highly in the selection process for programs such as EQIP. While all of the practices listed will not be applicable on every sweet potato farm due to varying conditions, these practices are a good starting point for developing a site-specific set of options for sweet potato growers.

Conservation Crop Rotation (328) Growing crops in a recurring sequence on the same field.

Contour Farming (330) Using ridges and furrows formed by tillage, planting and other farming operations to change the direction of runoff from directly downslope to around the hillslope.

Cover Crop after harvest (340) Crops including grasses, legumes, and forbs, for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes.

Critical area treatment (342) Establishing permanent vegetation on sites that have or are expected to have high erosion rates, and on sites that have physical, chemical or biological conditions that prevent the establishment of vegetation with normal practices.

Residue management (344) Managing the amount, orientation, and distribution of crop and other plant residues on the soil surface during a specified period of the year, while planting annual crops on a clean-tilled seedbed, or when growing biennial or perennial seed crops.

Windbreak/Shelter Belt establishment (380) Windbreaks and shelterbelts are single or multiple rows of trees or shrubs in linear configurations.

Field border (386) A strip of permanent vegetation established at the edge or around the perimeter of a field.

Filter strips (393) A strip or area of herbaceous vegetation situated between cropland, grazing land, or disturbed land (including forest land) and environmentally sensitive areas.

Grassed Waterway (412) A natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and established with suitable vegetation.

Heavy use area protection (561) The stabilization of areas frequently and intensively used by people, animals or vehicles by establishing vegetative cover, by surfacing with suitable materials, and/or by installing needed structures.

Structure for Water Control (587) A structure in a water management system that conveys water, controls the direction or rate of flow, maintains a desired water surface elevation or measures water.

Nutrient management (590) Managing the amount, source, placement, form and timing of the application of plant nutrients and soil amendments.

Pest Management (595) Utilizing environmentally sensitive prevention, avoidance, monitoring and suppression strategies, to manage weeds, insects, diseases, animals and other organisms (including invasive and non-invasive species), that directly or indirectly cause damage or annoyance.

Tree and Shrub establishment (612) Establishing woody plants by planting seedlings or cuttings, direct seeding, or natural regeneration

Early Successional Habitat (647) Manage early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife or natural communities.

Wetland restoration (657) Rehabilitation of a degraded wetland such that the soils, hydrology, native vegetation community, and biological functions are returned to their original condition to the extent possible.

Agrochemical containment facility (702) An environmentally safe permanent structure used for the filling of tanks and the mixing of chemicals (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizer, etc.) for agricultural operations and for safe storage of chemicals used in these operations.

For more information contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service county office at: <http://www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov/about/>. (Click “Find a Service Center” at the left, to access the county directory) or call the Center for Agricultural Partnerships at (828) 285-9340.