

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Subsurface Drain (606)

A subsurface drain is a conduit, such as corrugated plastic tubing, tile, or pipe, installed beneath the ground surface to collect and/or convey drainage water.

Practice Information

Subsurface drains are used to improve the environment for crops, reduce erosion, improve water quality, regulate water tables, collect groundwater for beneficial uses, or to remove salts and other contaminants from the soil profile.

Subsurface drainage is used in areas having a high water table where the benefits of lowering the water level are worth the expense. The practice also applies to areas that will benefit from controlling ground water and/or surface runoff. The soil must meet certain suitability requirements and an adequate outlet must be available to assure the drain will function properly.

The operation and maintenance of a subsurface drainage system includes periodic inspection and prompt repair of system components (e.g. structures for water control, underground outlets, vents, drain outlets, trash and rodent guards). In cold climates,



winterization protection from freezing conditions will be necessary.

Common Associated Practices

Subsurface Drain (606) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Pest Management (595), Nutrient Management (590), Surface Drainage, Main or Lateral (608), Underground Outlet (620), Critical Area Planting (342), and Drainage Water Management (554).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.