

Core4 Better Soil. Cleaner Water. Greater Profits. Brighter Future.

Conservation for Agriculture's Future

Conservation Crop Rotation



How it works

Crops are changed year by year in a planned sequence. Crop rotation is a common practice on sloping soils because of its potential for soil saving. Rotations can also reduce fertilizer needs when using alfalfa and other legumes as a part of the rotation, because they replace some of the nitrogen corn and other grain crops remove. Other benefits include improved crop yields, increasing organic matter to improve tilth, reduced pest problems and increased profit.

How it helps

- Pesticide costs may be reduced by naturally breaking the cycles of weeds, insects and diseases
- Grass and legumes in a rotation protect water quality by preventing excess nutrients or chemicals from entering water supplies
- Meadow or small grains cut soil erosion dramatically
- Crop rotations add diversity to an operation

Planning ahead

- Do you have use for other crops?
- Cover crops may help in crop rotation

Tech Notes

- Crops must be suited to your soils
- Design crop rotations to meet the residue needs of your crop residue management plans
- Rotations that include small grains or meadow provide better erosion control
- Small grains and meadow can always be used to replace any row crop or low residue crop to gain better erosion control
- Corn for grain can always be used to replace soybeans or any other low residue crop in the rotation to gain better erosion control
- For crop rotations that include hay (meadow) the rotation can be lengthened by maintaining the existing hay stand for additional years.
- Avoid planting a grass after a grass if possible

Maintenance

- Switch crops to maintain perennials in the rotation, if necessary
- Consider herbicide carry over to avoid crop failures