

Crop Rotation

Description

Crops are changed or rotated seasonally or every few years in a planned sequence. On sloping lands, hay crops are often grown in wide strips across the hill, alternating with strips of grain crops such as corn. After a few years, the crops are rotated so that the hay strips are planted to grain crops and vice versa. On flat landscapes, entire fields are rotated from one crop to the next, sometimes within the same year (such as soybeans planted after wheat).

Benefits

- Crop rotation adds plant and biological diversity to an operation. Pesticide costs are often reduced because growing different crops breaks the cycle of weeds, insects, and diseases naturally.
- Rotation of grain crops (corn, wheat and barley) with legumes (alfalfa, soybeans and clover) reduces fertilizer needs because legumes add nitrogen to the soil.
- Crops that grow close together (hay, alfalfa, clover, and small grains) can reduce soil erosion dramatically.