



NRCS Opportunities for Financial & Technical Assistance

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Conservation
Service

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Formerly Known as the Soil Conservation Service



Who We Are - History of NRCS

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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the **Soil Conservation Service (SCS)** is an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides technical assistance to farmers and other private landowners and managers.

5

Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS
for Farms, Ranches and Forests

1

PLANNING

Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

2

APPLICATION

With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.

3

ELIGIBILITY

Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.

4

RANKING

NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.

5

IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

Three Broad Categories

- **Engineering**
- **Ecological Sciences**
 - Agronomy
 - Grazing
 - Forestry
 - Wildlife
- **Soils**

- **Engineering example conservation practices**
 - Composting Facility
 - Access Road

Conservation Practice Overview

Composting Facility (Code 317)

A structure or device to contain and facilitate an aerobic microbial ecosystem for the decomposition of manure, other organic material, or both, into a final product sufficiently stable for storage, onfarm use, and application to land as a soil amendment.



Practice Information

A composting facility is designed to produce an amendment that adds organic matter and beneficial organisms to the soil, provides slow-release plant-available nutrients, and improves soil health. This amendment can be applied to the land or marketed to the public.

Organic solid wastes to be composted derive primarily from agricultural production or processing. The compost can be reused in the operation, utilized for crop production, improve soil health, or marketed to the public.

Composting is accomplished by mixing a carbon material with a nitrogen-rich material in a manner that encourages the growth of aerobic bacteria. Bins, windrows, or in-vessel structures, such as a rotary drum, can be used.

Design information for this practice includes site location, design sizing, storage period, and safety/biosecurity features. It may also include fabricated structure criteria.

This practice has a minimum expected life of 15 years. Operation requirements for the facility depend on the type of facility chosen by the producer. For every system, the temperature and moisture content of the compost will be monitored frequently. Bin or windrow compost must be turned at least once during the composting process. The operation and maintenance plan includes provisions for proper utilization of residual material. Routine maintenance is needed to ensure the facility operates as designed.

Composting Facility—Code 317




<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>




Field Office Technical Guide | VT


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Section 3 - Resource Concerns and Planning Criteria 

Section 4 - Practice Standards and Supporting Documents 

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Conservation Practice Standards & Support Documents 

Access Control (472)

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Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum Products (333)











Amending Soil Properties with Lime (805)

Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste (591)

Access Road (560)

 Export Grid

 Highlights Only

Document Title 	Type 	Pub Date 	End Date 
560 VT CPS Access Road 2021 		2021-01-04	--
560 VT SOW Access Road 2021 		2021-01-04	--
560 VT PO Access Road 2021 		2021-01-04	--
560 VT SD Access Road 2021 		2021-01-04	--
560 VT OM Access Road 2021 		2021-01-04	--
560 VT NED Access Road 2021 		2021-01-04	--

Sheet & Rill Soil Erosion



Soil Erosion & Water Quality



Mitigating Conservation Practices

- **Crop Rotation**
- **Cover Crop**
- **Pasture & Hayland Planting**
- **Reduced Tillage**
- **No-Till**
- **Stripcropping**



Soil Organic Matter Depletion



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Soil Compaction



Roots run
laterally
above a
compacted
layer



Soil Quality Practices

- **Crop Rotation**
- **Cover Crop**
- **Pasture and Hayland Planting**
- **No-Till**
- **Soil Carbon Amendment**

Reduced Tillage With Mulch

Lovin' Mama Farm, Amsterdam, NY



Cover Crop and No-Tillage



No-till Ecosystem

Tilled Ecosystem

Crop residue

Middens

Crust

Root channel

Worm burrows

Plow pan



Importance of Soil Aggregates



2016 Drought—Amherst, MA

Cover crop and conventional tillage



Cover crop and No-Tillage



Soil Organic Matter Depletion



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- Improve soil organic matter quantity, quality, and aggregate stability
- Improve plant productivity and health
- Compost, biochar, other carbon amendments (wood ash or wood chips)
- Requires a soil test or in-field soil health assessment
- SOM levels <5% or other resource concern



Assumptions

- **Compost**
- **Biochar**
- **Compost/Biochar Mixes**
- **Other Soil Amendment
(Wood chips or Wood
Ash)**
- **Compost or biochar
mixes applied at ~4
Tons/Acre**



FY 2023 Payment Rates

C	D	E	F
Practice_Name	Component	Unit_T	Unit_Cost
Soil Carbon Amendment	100% Biochar	Ac	160.19
Soil Carbon Amendment	20% Biochar-80% Compost	Ac	71.82
Soil Carbon Amendment	40% Biochar-60% Compost	Ac	89.88
Soil Carbon Amendment	60% Biochar-40% Compost	Ac	118.76
Soil Carbon Amendment	80% Biochar-20% Compost	Ac	165.3
Soil Carbon Amendment	Compost - On Site	Ac	264.63
Soil Carbon Amendment	Compost + Biochar - Small Areas	kSqFt	8.78
Soil Carbon Amendment	Other Carbon Amendment	Ac	140.19

- **EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
 - Fix Problems
 - Payments are reimbursements (~75-90% of cost)

- **CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program**
 - Get rewarded for good management
 - Payments for existing practices (\$7.50/ac for cropland)
 - Payments for practices and enhancements

- **Applications are accepted continuously;**
- **Application batching periods are established in association with national guidance;**
- **Customer works with their local FSA office to establish USDA eligibility**
 - NRCS approved conservation plan
 - Agricultural Producer status
 - Agricultural Land status and Land Control
 - Food Security Act Compliance
 - Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification
 - Other programmatic eligibility as appropriate

- **Applications are selected for funding based on their ranking scores;**
- **Applicants not selected for funding are notified by letter, typically in September or October, and are offered to defer their application until the following fiscal year.**

IRS Reporting

- **The National Finance Center reports payments made to participants to the IRS on Form 1099- MISC.**
- **NRCS employees are not permitted to advise participants on the tax implications of conservation payments.**

WOOD CHIPS FOR THE LAND

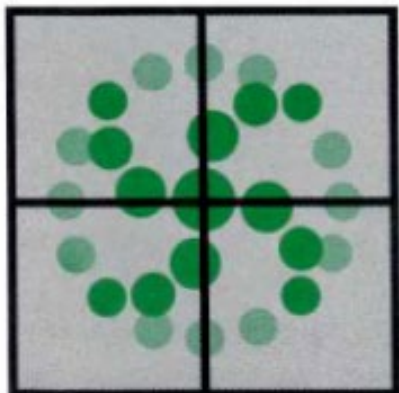
By ARTHUR C. McINTYRE, *regional forester, Northeastern Region, Soil Conservation Service*

FOR MANY YEARS farmers have used sawdust and shavings for cattle bedding, for poultry litter, and for mulching. More recently, they have found that wood in mulches and soil amendments helps improve soil structure and produces better crops. There are communities where farm demand for wood waste often exceeds supplies from mill and factory. This demand has put a price on sawdust and shavings.



NEW YORK'S FOOD AND LIFE SCIENCES BULLETIN

NO. 2, OCTOBER 1971



PLANT SCIENCES

AGRONOMY NUMBER 1

CORNELL UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION, NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES, A STATUTORY COLLEGE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY, CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NEW YORK

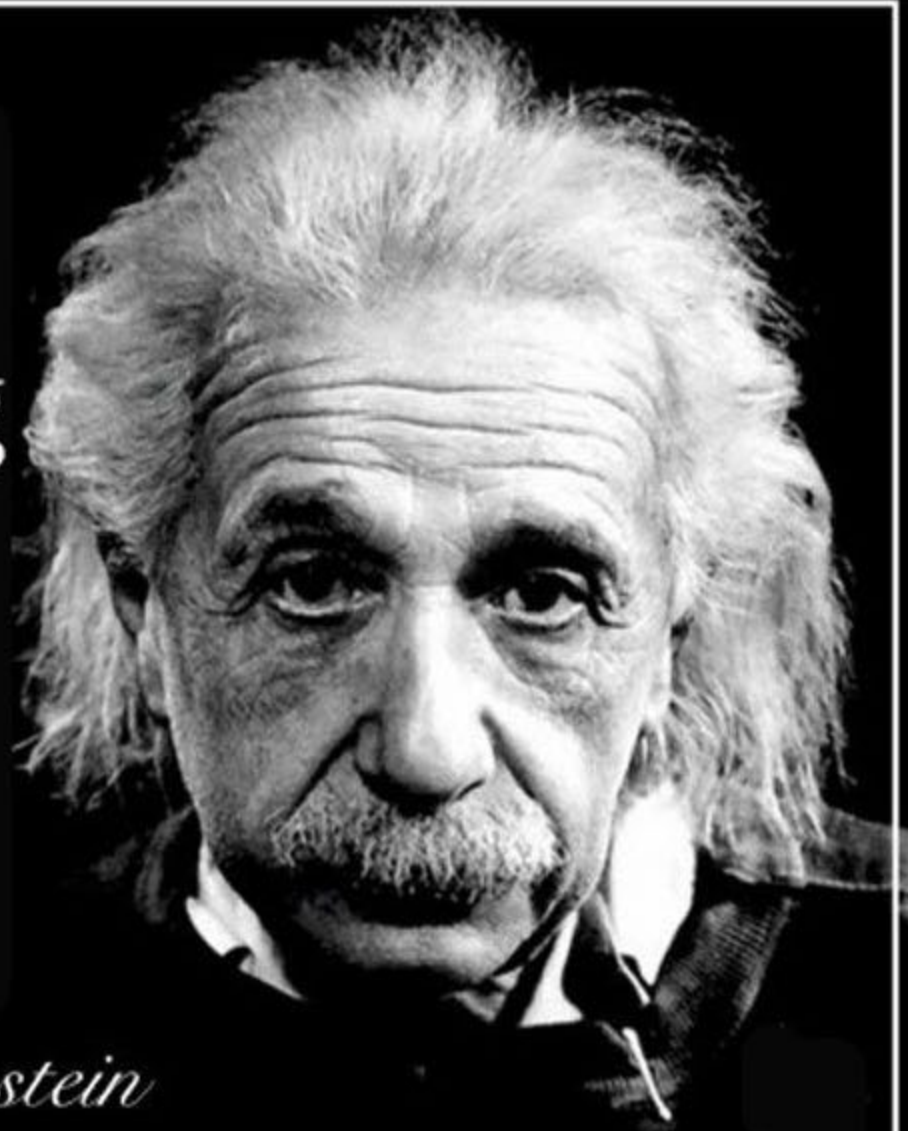
**Soil Management for Vegetable Production
on Honeoye Soil with Special Reference
to the Use of Hardwood Chips** by G. R. Free*



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Insanity:
doing the same thing
over and over again
and expecting
different results.

- Albert Einstein



Questions?



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