

Installing and/or Modifying Drainage Systems

Producers, Landowners

In preparing your future planting plans, many producers are considering the need for installing new tile and/or expanding existing drainage systems.

As your drainage plans are being developed you should also plan on stopping by the local Farm Service Agency Office to update your AD-1026 form which is also known as the “Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Certification.”

By updating this form a referral will be sent to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) who will provide you with a certified wetland determination for the fields where drainage is planned. USDA requires that farmers self-certify their compliance with the wetland conservation provisions; this includes disclosing all new drainage plans that have not been previously evaluated by NRCS. The USDA wetland conservation provisions do not require that farmers receive approval prior to undertaking drainage activities. However, an up-to-date certified wetland determination issued by NRCS will provide the most accurate information on the location of protected wetland areas. This information will allow producers to make the most informed decision when moving forward on a drainage project.

Producers are encouraged to update their AD-1026 as early as possible to get the process started.

They are also encouraged to provide information on all prior drainage activity (ditching and tiling) in the fields where a certified wetland determination will be completed. NRCS's ability to provide a timely response to your drainage plans will depend on the number of outstanding requests received.

NRCS is committing additional staff and resources to be able to provide a shorter response time to complete certified wetland determinations.

Producers who chose to install drainage improvements without a certified wetland determination need to be aware that any drainage activities done in an area without previous cropping history; or in areas that are consistently wet, pose a high risk of resulting in converting a protected wetland area. Converting protected wetland areas could result in the loss of USDA program benefits on all land the producer operates.

Landowners are also reminded that the State of Minnesota has wetland protection provisions for all land uses including ag-lands. These provisions are administered through the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The provisions are completely separate, though on ag-lands, similar to the USDA wetland protection requirements. Landowners are encouraged to check with their local Soil and Water Conservation District if there's questions concerning WCA.

To minimize your risk of converting a protected wetland area, plan to contact your local USDA Service Center and update your AD-1026 prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects.

Minnesota NRCS Website: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov



Rolls of tile for installation