Do You Have Problems With:

- Livestock knee deep in mud
- Crossing a stream with equipment
- Eroded stream banks
- Cattle loafing in streams and polluting the water
- Equipment damaged crossing streams

Stream crossings can be a muddy mess

A Stream Crossing Can Help

A stream crossing provides a hard, stable area where cattle or equipment can cross a stream without damaging the streambed or banks.

Benefits of a Stream Crossing:

- Provide livestock access to all your pastures
- Crop and graze fields that are difficult to get to
- Improve cattle health by keeping them out of the mud
- Keep your farm water cleaner by keeping cattle out of stream
- You decide where the cattle cross the stream

Hog panel stream crossing

Costs for a Stream Crossing:

The costs for a stream crossing will be different depending on what you use to build it and how large the stream is. Some of the costs to think about are:

- Grading the stream banks and bottom
- Gravel and filter fabric
- Hog panels, stone or other material to go in the bed of the stream
- Fencing to lead the livestock to the crossing

Stream Crossing

How do I build a stream crossing?
Stream crossings can be built in several different ways using different materials. The main things that need to be done are to slope the banks of the stream on each side and provide a firm streambed.

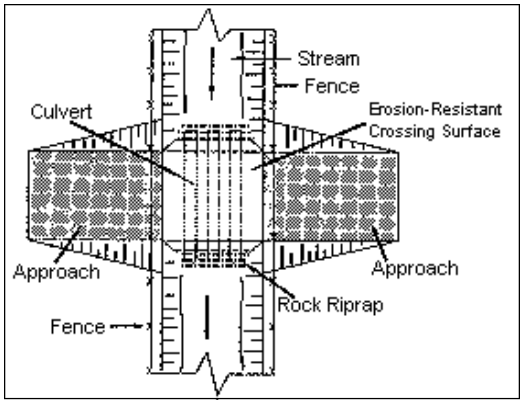
- Make banks flat enough for livestock or equipment to move safely down the bank.
- Protect banks with gravel laid over filter fabric.
- Make the streambed firm enough for cows to walk across or equipment to cross without causing ruts.
- For gravel or bedrock streams, no work may need to be done on the streambed.

The simplest type of streambed protection is to lay rock over filter fabric. However, cows don't like to walk on large rock and smaller rock can wash out during high flows.

Stream crossing under construction

For mud bottom streams, there are several options. Hog slats (precast concrete units used in confined hog housing) laid over a bed of filter fabric and gravel makes a very good crossing.

A Geoweb® is a plastic web that can be filled with gravel. A Geoweb® filled with gravel, and laid over filter fabric makes a very good stream crossing.



Typical stream crossing

For both the hog panels and the Geoweb® it is very important to keep the material placed in the streambed below the level of the streambed. This will help prevent the material from being washed out during high flows.

Hog panel stream crossing

Geoweb®, Presto Products Co

Stream Crossing

Fencing

If the stream crossing will be used by livestock, an important part of the practice is to fence the stream so that livestock use the crossing and stay out of the stream.

How to maintain the Stream Crossing

If the stream crossing is installed correctly, very little maintenance should be needed.

- Check the crossing after storms and make sure streambed and banks haven't eroded
- Repair eroded areas
- If livestock use the crossing make sure that fences are still in place

Fencing restricts livestock access to the crossing and protects the stream

You put in a stream crossing because you want to get to the other side, but

- The real benefit of a stream crossing is to keep the water in the stream clean
- Cows will not tear up the stream banks
- Less manure will get into the stream
- Equipment will not tear up the stream bed and banks when you cross
- Trees and grass will grow along the stream and keep the water cooler and cleaner

Help is Available

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

SMALL SCALE SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR FARM

Technical Help Is Available

Your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists that can assist you with a stream crossing. They can also help you develop a Conservation Plan to solve other problems you have identified on your farm.

There is no charge for our assistance. Simply call your local office at the number listed below to set up an appointment and we will come to your farm.

You may also be eligible to receive financial assistance, through a state or federal program. Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so you can make the best decision for your operation. All NRCS programs and services are voluntary.

Helping People Help the Land

For More Information Contact the:

Natural Resources Conservation Service

60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46
Warwick, RI 02886
(401) 828-1300
Web Address: www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov
E-mail Address: NRCSInfo@ri.usda.gov

NRCS accepts applications on a continuous basis throughout the year.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basic of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

January 2009