

## What is field tile?

Field tile is tubing or pipe buried in the ground to convey subsurface water to an outlet such as a stream or ditch. Farmers install tile in agricultural fields to make the soil conditions more uniform, dry up wet spots, reduce erosion and prevent crop roots from rotting during wet periods. This improves crop yields and prevents compaction of the soil. When a field has uniformly spaced tile throughout, the ground is not normally saturated when a heavy rain falls, thus allowing water to soak into the field rather than running off. This helps keep nutrients and topsoil in place. Sometimes where your lawn is more lush can indicate the presence of a tile. Water rights/Ohio Drainage Laws should be followed when encountering or installing tile. Refer to OSU Extension Bulletin 822. Septic systems should not be connected to field tile unless permitted by Fairfield Dept. of Health.

- Tile is usually made of orange clay or plastic (black, white or yellow).
- The transition between installing clay tile to installing plastic tile happened in the mid 1970's to early 1980's.
- Depth typically varies between 2.5 feet and 5 feet deep, but can be much deeper. Clay tile tends to be on the shallow end since it was often installed by hand.
- It costs approximately \$90,000 to tile a 100 acre field (more if mains are large).
- The investment can be recouped in approximately 5 years in agricultural settings.



Above: Farm fields shown with systematic tile and random tile. The field with the systematic tile is much dryer than the one below it with random tile. Tile can be seen in aerials if soil conditions are right at the time of the flight. Plastic tiles tend to show up better than clay. Tiles are harder to see in grassed areas, like lawns on aerial photos.