

## H2Ohio Working Lands Buffer Standard

### Purpose

- Filter surface water before it enters streams and other water sources that contribute to harmful nutrient runoff to waterways
- To minimize streambank erosion and to trap sediment

### Applicability

Acres converted from cropland or an existing filter strip, hay buffer or field border with perennial vegetative cover will be considered eligible for this program. If the proposed acres are an existing filter strip, the area is ineligible to receive funding for the same practice through the USDA, ODA, local grants, or other programs such as (CRP, CREP, EQIP, H2Ohio, MWCD). Cost share funding is not eligible for: Filter strips and field borders that were previously meadows, existing pasture, and/or ditch maintenance right of ways. The applicable acres must be within the following counties of: Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Lucas, Marion, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot Counties.

### Specifications

1. The following are areas that are eligible: land adjacent to ditches, perennial streams, and rivers.
2. The new buffer cannot be enrolled adjacent to or alongside of an existing filter strip, field border, or any other conservation buffer or filter strip on an existing buffer/filter area.
3. The minimum buffer width to be eligible is 20 feet wide and a maximum average width of 300 feet measured from top of ditch/stream bank.
4. If the buffer acreage calculated is greater than 50% of the field size, then the remainder of the field may be enrolled in the buffer program.
5. New seeding must meet USDA-NRCS Appendix A, table 16, Filter strips. If the site was previously a filter strip, then the local SWCD must determine if it meets the standard or if improvements must be made to qualify.
6. Soil tests are necessary for any phosphorus fertilizer application at the time of establishment. Applications of phosphorus are not allowed during the maintenance period unless approved by ODA. Applications of nutrients shall be limited to the Ohio Agronomy Guide recommendations for legume-grass mixtures. Recent soil test shall be 4 years or less if fertilization is requested.
7. Harvesting of the buffer area is encouraged.
8. The producer must control undesirable weed species, especially those listed in Rule 901:5-37-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code; failing to do so could result in forfeiture of payment.
9. Producers may need to periodically regrade and reestablish the buffer area when sediment deposition at the buffer area-field interface jeopardizes its function. Producer must reestablish the buffer area vegetation in these regraded areas, if determined by the local SWCD.
10. If grazing is used to harvest vegetation from the buffer area, the grazing plan must ensure that the integrity and function of the buffer area is not adversely affected.
11. Residual forage height must be a minimum of 4" height by November 1<sup>st</sup> each year and must be maintained during the non-growing season.
12. Practice must be maintained for 2 years from the date of approval by the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD).

### Participant Payments

Cost share is available at a rate of \$200 per acre a year for 2 years.