

Ohio Working Lands Buffer Program

Purpose

1. To encourage agricultural producers to establish vegetative cover on cropland that is near environmentally sensitive areas.
2. To allow harvest and removal of forage in established areas to reduce overall nutrient levels.
3. To reduce suspended solids and associated contaminants in runoff.
4. To reduce dissolved contaminant loadings in runoff.

Applicability

Applies to cropland areas situated below cropland where sediment, nutrients, and animal manure have the potential to be transported from the field and enter environmentally sensitive areas.

Specifications

The completed practice must meet “Criteria for Working Lands Buffer Seeding, Establishment, and Maintenance.”

Guidelines

1. Only acreage converted from cropland to perennial vegetative cover will be considered eligible for this program.
2. The maximum width eligible is 300 feet average. The minimum eligible width is 50 feet.
3. Cost-share funding is authorized at a rate of \$120 per acre per year for a 5-year period. Funding is for the establishment and maintenance of perennial forage and biomass.
4. Cost share funding is not authorized for:
 - a. Existing Meadows, Filter strips and field borders
 - b. Existing pasture and hay land.
 - c. Existing or required ditch maintenance right of ways.
5. Practice must be maintained for 5 years from the date of practice installation.
6. Forage plantings must include two species, including at least one cool season grass specie. Cool season grass specie(s) must be planted at 50% pure stand seeding rate minimum.
7. Residual forage height must be a minimum of 4” height by September 15th each year. Residual forage must be maintained during the non-growing season.
8. 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 15th Ed. recommendations for legume-grass mixtures.
9. Limited grazing is allowed as incidental use when adjacent crop field residue is being grazed after harvest.

Participant Payments

Participants will receive \$240 per acre (2- years of payments) upon certification of the practice by the SWCD. Three additional annual maintenance payments will be paid by the SWCD no earlier than September 15th and no later than November 1st in years 3-5. No participant shall receive more than one payment from the SWCD during the calendar year.