Continuous CRP

January 2015

CP 21 - Filter Strip

Filter strips are designed to remove sediment and other pollutants from runoff water before they are carried into water bodies or streams. Grass filter strips are typically planted between fields and water bodies (rivers, streams, lakes and drainage ditches) to protect water quality. They slow runoff from agriculture fields, trapping and filtering sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other potential pollutants.

However, in extensive agricultural areas, these filter strips may serve as significant grassland habitat available for wildlife.

Filter strips are usually planted either to native warm-season grasses or cool-season grasses, with the addition of native wildflowers and legumes. Common warm-season grasses used in Nebraska filter strips include big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, and indiangrass. In Nebraska, filter strips often represent the only uncultivated areas on farmland which provides critical habitat for many types of birds and pollinators. Warm-season grasses commonly used for filter strip plantings are known to provide nesting, foraging, and brood rearing habitat for northern bobwhite quail and ring-necked pheasants. Filter strips that are planted to native grasses and wildflowers will provide greater wildlife habitat benefits.

"In Nebraska, filter strips often represent the only uncultivated areas on farmland providing critical habitat needs for birds, bees and butterflies ."

Grass filter strips, planted under the CRP program, CP21, range from 20 to 120 feet wide, depending on site characteristics and landowner goals. Periodic management of filter strip vegetation is desirable to ensure proper plant growth and structure. Prescribed burning may also be used when an approved burn plan has been developed.

A carefully designed filter strip can reduce erosion along stream banks such as this.

Vegetative filter strips can be planted in native grass, legumes and forbs to provide wildlife benefits while reducing runoff and erosion.

INTERESTING FACT

Wider filter strips offer greater wildlife benefit than narrow strips. Filter strips should be greater than 30 ft. wide to provide the most benefit to quail and pheasants.

Good example of a filter strip along the edge of a natural riparian buffer. Photo courtesy of NRCS.

Filter strips such as this can increase overall ecological diversity by improving habitat for a variety of animal species.

Purpose

- Removes nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides and other pollutants from surface runoff and subsurface flow to protect water quality. Provides significant wildlife habitat in intensively farmed areas.

Eligibility

- Acres must be cropland or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during four of six crop years. Years are determined by the Farm Bill.
- Eligible acres may be signed up on a continuous basis and do not have to wait for a sign up period as long as acres are available.
- Does not have to be Highly Erodible Land (HEL) to be eligible.
- Filter Strips will be a minimum of 20 feet and a maximum of 120 feet from the edge of the eligible body of water.
- CRP Filter Strips are only eligible on cropland that is adjacent and parallel to streams, wetlands, and permanent bodies of water such as lakes/ponds.
- Contracts may have a duration of 10 to 15 years.

Rental Rate

- Annual payment based on the county soil rental rate established for the three predominate soils.
- Additional incentive of 20% above annual rental rate payment on all acres.

Incentives

- One time sign up bonus payment (SIP) of $100 per acre.
- Reimbursement payment of approximately 50% of costs for establishment and management practices.
- One time practice incentive payment (PIP) of approximately 40% for establishment costs once all the practices are completed and initial 50% reimbursement payment is made. Both of these payments together make up about 90% of the cost of establishment.

Management

- Mid-Contract Management (MCM) is required at least once during the length of the contract.
- Managed haying and grazing is not allowed for this practice.

The purpose of a filter strip is to protect streams and lakes from pollutants such as sediment, nutrients and organic matter. Filter strips also significantly reduce soil erosion while providing benefits to wildlife.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Through a partnership with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, wildlife biologists are available to help provide wildlife habitat guidance, technical assistance on the available conservation programs and design seeding mixtures.

For further information visit NebraskaPF.com or call 844-733-3669.