

Name of Practice: BUFFER STRIP CROPPING  
DCR Specifications for No. SL-3B

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's buffer strip cropping best management practice that are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

A series of narrow permanent protective strips of sod alternating with wider strips of row or close growing crops implemented to reduce erosion and surface runoff and improve surface water quality.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. Producers must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan prepared and signed by a Virginia certified nutrient management planner. The plan must include all participant controlled agricultural production acreage contained within the tract that this BMP will be implemented on and must be on file with the local SWCD. Cost-share payments shall not be made until a current nutrient management plan is on file with the SWCD. Any nutrients applied before March 1st must be in accordance with a certified nutrient management plan.
2. Cost-share and tax credit are authorized for the establishment and planting of vegetated buffer strips on existing cropland fields. Tax credit is based on the cost of establishing the buffer strips.
3. Cost-share and tax credit are not authorized for repeating or adding any approved measures under this practice with the same person on the same acreage. This is a one-time incentive.
4. Cost-share and tax credit cannot be authorized for SL-3 and this SL-3B on the same acreage, or WQ-1 Grass Filter Strip.
5. Soil loss rates must be computed for all applications for use in establishing priority considerations.
6. In order to be eligible for cost-share or tax credit, nutrient management plans must be prepared by a certified planner who holds a current Nutrient Management Planner Certificate issued by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Nutrient Management Plans must be written to comply with all requirements set forth in the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, (4 VAC 50-85-10 et seq.) and the criteria set forth in the Virginia Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria, revised July 2014.

7. This practice is subject to NRCS Standard 332 Contour Buffer Strips.
8. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years following the calendar year of installation. The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting either a cost-share payment or a state tax credit for this practice the participant agrees to maintain all practice components for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the SWCD throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to maintain the practice may result in reimbursement of cost share and/or tax credits.

C. Rate(s)

1. An incentive rate of \$15 per acre has been established for this practice for all field area within the buffer strip system. Cost-share payment is made on a per acre basis to cover a portion of the cost and to serve as an incentive to establish a buffer strip system. Acreage for cost-share assistance (incentive) is the field acreage or that portion of the field served by the establishment of a series of buffer strips.
2. As set forth by Virginia Code § 58.1-339.3 and §58.1-439.5, Virginia law currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain BMP practices. The current tax credit rate, which is subject to change in accordance with the Code of Virginia, is 25% of the total eligible cost not to exceed \$17,500.00.
3. If a cooperator receives cost-share, only the cooperator's eligible out-of-pocket share of the project cost is used to determine the tax credit.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and SWCD staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above, and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA), for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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