



Grass Filter Strips for Reducing Crop Damage by Canada Geese

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

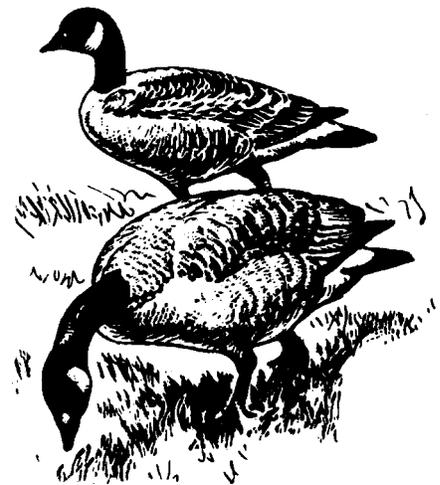
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From practically none, to too many in some areas...

That's the story of the giant Canada goose in North Dakota. The statewide population of these "resident" geese, so named because they nest in North Dakota, has grown to the point where many of them are causing problems for farmers. Traditional methods for resolving goose damage to crops (propane cannons, scarecrows, and plastic flags) are still highly recommended for use. Another option, habitat management, should also be considered by landowners.

Vegetative barriers along the edge of wetlands help restrict the movements of Canada geese between the water and nearby crop fields. Canada geese typically avoid using areas where vegetation restricts their view or access to croplands. Depending on the vegetative components, grass filter strips can also serve as alternative feeding sites for Canada geese. Filter strips also enhance the effectiveness of frightening devices such as propane cannons and plastic flags by providing alternative resting and feeding sites for geese to move to after they are frightened from crop fields.

Filter strips also provide water quality protection by reducing the amount of sediment, organic matter, and some nutrients and pesticides that runoff into adjacent wetlands. Filter strips also provide localized erosion protection since the vegetation covers an area of soil that otherwise might have high erosion potential.



Through the Conservation Reserve Program, farmers who wish to establish filter strips may be eligible for up to 50 percent of the installation costs. The Farm Service Agency County Committee determines which croplands are eligible for the program, which offers a continuous sign-up period without the normal bid process. Contracts are for 10-15 years, and rental rates received by the landowner are based on prevailing cash equivalent rental rates and site specific soil productivity. There is also a 20 percent annual incentive payment, a \$7 per acre annual maintenance payment for filter strips and a one time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$10 per acre per year which the landowner receives when the contract is signed. A one time Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) of 40 percent of the eligible cost to install the filter strip is also paid to the landowner when the project is completed and certified. The minimum acceptable width of a filter strip is 20 feet and the maximum average width is 120 feet. The maximum width is recommended for goose damage management.

A variety of grass mixtures makes effective filter strips and alternative goose habitat. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide a list of the grass mixtures that are approved for use as filter strips.

Example: A landowner enrolls 10 acres into the continuous sign-up period for 15 years. The entire 10 acres will be devoted to filter strips. The average Soil Rental Rate (SRR) is determined to be \$30. Cost to install the filter strip is approximately \$1,000.

Step 1 = Average Soil Rental Rate (SRR) = \$30 per acre
($\$30 \times 10 \text{ acres} = \300)

Step 2 = Incentive Payment = 20% of SRR, which in this example equals \$6
($\$6 \times 10 \text{ acres} = \60)

Step 3 = Maintenance Rate is \$7 per acre per year
($\$7 \times 10 \text{ acres} = \70)

Total annual rental payment (the totals of Steps 1-3) will be \$430 for 15 years

Step 4 = One time Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$10 per acre per year
($\$10 \times 10 \text{ acres} \times 15 \text{ years} = \$1,500$)

Step 5 = 50% cost-share to install the filter strip. Estimated cost is \$1,000.
($\$1,000 \times 50\% = \500)

Step 6 = One time Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) of 40% of the cost of the installation
($\$1,000 \times 40\% = \400)

Total cost-share and PIP for a \$1,000 installation cost would be the total of Step 5 (\$500) plus Step 6 (\$400) which equals \$900.

Under this example, the landowner would receive:

- **\$430 annual rental payment for 15 years**
- **\$1,500 Signing Incentive Payment**
- **\$900 cost-share and Practice Incentive Payment to install a \$1,000 filter strip**

Contact your local NRCS office for additional information about the cost-share programs for filter strips. For assistance with the management of goose damage to crops, contact the USDA/Wildlife Services office in Bismarck at (701) 250-4405.

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