



# Field Borders

Conservation Practice Job Sheet

386

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Landowner \_\_\_\_\_



## Definition

A field border is a band or strip of perennial vegetation established on the edge of a cropland field.

## Purpose

A field border reduces sheet, rill, and gully erosion at the edge of fields; protects water quality by trapping sediment, chemical and other pollutants; provides a turning area for farm equipment; and provides wildlife habitat.

## Where used

- On the outside edges of fields.
- Complementary to a conservation management system.

## Requirements for establishing field borders

Field borders should be a minimum of 20 feet wide and should be wide enough to allow turning of farm equipment.



## Conservation management system

Field borders are normally established as part of a conservation management system to address the soil, water, air, plant, and animal needs and the owner's objectives. A field border used with contouring, contour stripcropping, cross-slope farming patterns, or terraces eliminates the normal planting of end rows or headlands in uphill and downhill directions. It also provides a turning area for farm equipment, which reduces sheet, rill, and gully erosion. Field borders can also provide forage production and improve farm aesthetics. They are most effective when used in combination with other agronomic or structural practices to provide conservation benefits.

## Operation and maintenance

Inspect and repair field borders after storms to fill in gullies, remove sediment, reseed disturbed areas, and take other measures to ensure the effectiveness of the border. Mow (and harvest if possible) field border vegetation during noncritical times for wildlife to encourage dense vegetation growth.

## Wildlife

Field borders can enhance wildlife objectives. Benefits depend on the vegetative species used and management practiced. Consider using adapted native vegetative species that can provide food and cover for important wildlife. Increase width, if needed, to provide necessary protection for nesting animals from predators. Delay mowing of grassed area until after the nesting season for ground-nesting birds and animals.

## Specifications

Site-specific requirements are listed on the specifications sheet. Additional provisions are entered on the job sketch sheet. Specifications are prepared in accordance with the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and the Field Border practice standard (386).