



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

E595D

Increase the size requirement of refuges planted to slow pest resistance to Bt crops

Conservation Practice 595: Pest Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual and Mixed)

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description

*Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) plant-incorporated protectants are plants that have been genetically altered to produce proteins that are harmful to certain insect pests. Widespread implementation of Bt crops has decreased insecticide use and increased crop yields, but it must be used as part of an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to protect the crop from pest species that are not susceptible to the Bt toxin and to manage pest resistance.

Crop rotation, scouting and resistance management strategies, such as planting and creating refuges of non-Bt crops, are essential when farming Bt crops. Insects have developed resistance to Bt proteins. To mitigate the development of further resistance, growers are required to plant refuges of non-transgenic crops. These refuges produce numbers of susceptible insects that will help sustain populations of non-resistant insects.

The size of refuge requirement depends on the environment, pest and strain of the crop. The size of refuge is determined by resistance risk and can vary depending on the product. A recent study published in the Journal of Integrated Pest Management revealed, compliance has been a challenge. Only 40% of growers surveyed stated they were planning to plant a refuge (Reisig 2017). Further, EPA (2018) reports document refuge compliance as low as 7% in areas at the highest risk of resistance. Non-compliance arises, in part, due to a

E595D – Increase the size requirement of refuges planted to slow pest resistance to Bt crops	May 2023	Page   1
--	----------	----------

concern for yield loss and thus profit loss if a non-Bt refuge is planted.

**Criteria**

- This enhancement will increase the size of the required refuge by an additional 10% (of the total crop acreage) in areas with the highest risk of pest resistance to Bt crops<sup>1</sup>, Ex. If the label requires a refuge to be 20% of the entire crop, an additional 10% area of non-Bt crop would be needed to be planted for a total of a 30% refuge to receive incentivization under this enhancement.
- Additional refuge planted must adhere to the extant terms of registration for Bt crops. (see Fig 1.)

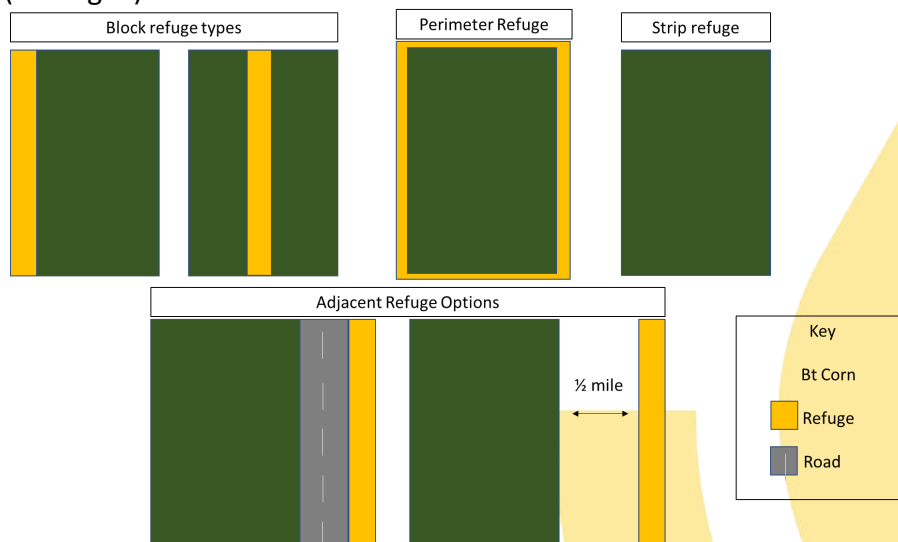


Figure 1. Refuge Planting Design Options

- Refuge designs include separate fields, blocks within fields (e.g., along the edges or headlands), perimeter strips, or in-field strips can be used to achieve the 10% increase.

1-The high risk resistance region consists of the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Mississippi, South Carolina, Oklahoma (only the counties of Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kay, Kiowa, Tillman, Washita), Tennessee (only the counties of Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Dyer, Fayette, Franklin, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Lake, Lauderdale, Lincoln, Madison, Obion, Rutherford, Shelby, and Tipton), Texas (except the counties of Carson, Dallam, Hansford, Hartley, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Roberts, and Sherman), Virginia (only the counties of Dinwiddie, Franklin City, Greensville, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Southampton, Suffolk City, Surrey, Sussex) and Missouri (only the counties of Dunkin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Scott, Stoddard) Virginia (only the counties of Dinwiddie, Franklin City, Greensville, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Southampton, Suffolk City, Surrey, Sussex) and Missouri (only the counties of Dunkin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Scott, Stoddard).



# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Refuge area must meet the proximity requirements of the Bt crop type (e.g., if a block refuge is planted it must be within a half mile of the Bt field, if perimeter or in-field strips are implemented, the strips must be at least 4 consecutive rows wide, etc.)
- Required refuge areas must be planted to the same crop as the Bt crop (i.e., a Bt corn field must have a non-Bt corn counterpart). The non-Bt variety must be as similar to the Bt variety as possible using an isoline hybrid if available.
- Growers who receive the incentivization are encouraged to monitor fields for Bt resistance and report unexpected pest damage to Bt crops to the company from which the grower obtained the Bt seed.

### Documentation and Implementation Requirements:

#### **Participant will:**

- Prior to implementation, provide documentation for review showing producer’s record of integrated pest management meeting all Conservation Practice Standard Integrated Pest Management (CPS 595) general criteria.
- During implementation, keep documentation, such as records, plans, receipts, showing the implementation of the activities selected including:
  - Document the Bt crop and the refuge size requirement from the label.
  - A map showing the non-Bt variety of the crop (refuge area) in relation to the Bt crops, noting the original refuge plus the additional refuge areas.
  - Photographs of Bt and non-Bt crops planted in the field.
- After implementation, make documentation and records available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.



# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

**NRCS will:**

- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Integrated Pest Management (CPS 595) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- As needed, provide technical assistance to the participant as requested.
- After implementation, verify implementation by reviewing records kept during enhancement implementation.

**NRCS Documentation Review:**

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contract Number \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Applied \_\_\_\_\_ Fiscal Year Completed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature                      Date