

Landowner _____



Photo credit: Dr. L.W. Burger, Jr., Mississippi State University

WHAT ARE FIELD BORDERS

A field border is a strip of permanent vegetation established at the edge or around the perimeter of a field.

PURPOSE

A field border is used to:

- Reduce soil erosion from wind and water,
- Protect soil and water quality
- Manage harmful insect populations
- Provide wildlife food and cover
- Improve air quality

HOW IT HELPS THE LAND

Field borders used with contouring, contour stripcropping, cross-slope farming patterns, or terraces eliminate the normal planting of end

rows or headlands in uphill and downhill directions. Field borders also provide turning areas and travel lanes for farm equipment operating in the field. They can also provide stable grass areas on the windward side of fields to trap blowing soil particles. In addition, field borders can 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

WHERE THE PRACTICE APPLIES

Field borders are located at the edges of crop fields and can connect to other buffer practices within fields such as grassed waterways. They may also apply to recreational land or on other land where agronomic crops are grown.



Field borders consist of adapted species of permanent grass, legumes, and/or shrubs. Native species are desirable. Field borders are more effective and provide more environmental benefits when planted around the entire field. Plants that attract beneficial insects can increase the population of beneficial insects that prey on harmful ones. Photo credit: Dr. L.W. Burger, Jr., Mississippi State University.

WHERE TO GET HELP

For assistance in planning field borders, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service or local Conservation District office.

APPLYING THE PRACTICE

Field borders can be a minimum of 20 to 100 feet in width depending on the purpose and objective. The borders need to be established to permanent grass and/or legumes. Any ephemeral gullies or rills present in the planned border area needs to be smoothed during seedbed preparation.

When borders are used to provide stable areas for controlling wind erosion, they need to be located on the upwind side of the field. Grass species that have an upright, stiff-stemmed growth habit work best for this purpose.

Field borders can enhance wildlife objectives. 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. Also increase width to protect wildlife if a portion of the field border will be used for equipment movement or

turn rows. Delay mowing of grassed area until after the nesting season for ground-nesting birds and animals. When managing field borders for wildlife, never disturb (such as mowing or disking) more than 50 percent of the field borders surrounding a field in any one year.

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. Do not mow or burn during the nesting season (normally May through July) to protect ground-nesting wildlife. In place of mowing, consider other vegetative management techniques, such as “wickbar” herbicide applicators or prescribed burning. In areas with adequate moisture, lightly disk the field border on a 2- or 3-year cycle to promote growth of native vegetation.

SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications are prepared in accordance with the Oklahoma NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and the Conservation Practice Standard Field Border (386).

Field Border – Job Sheet

Landowner _____ Field number _____

Purpose (check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce erosion from wind and water	<input type="checkbox"/> Management of harmful insect populations
<input type="checkbox"/> Soil and water quality protection	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide wildlife food and cover
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase carbon storage in biomass and soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve air quality

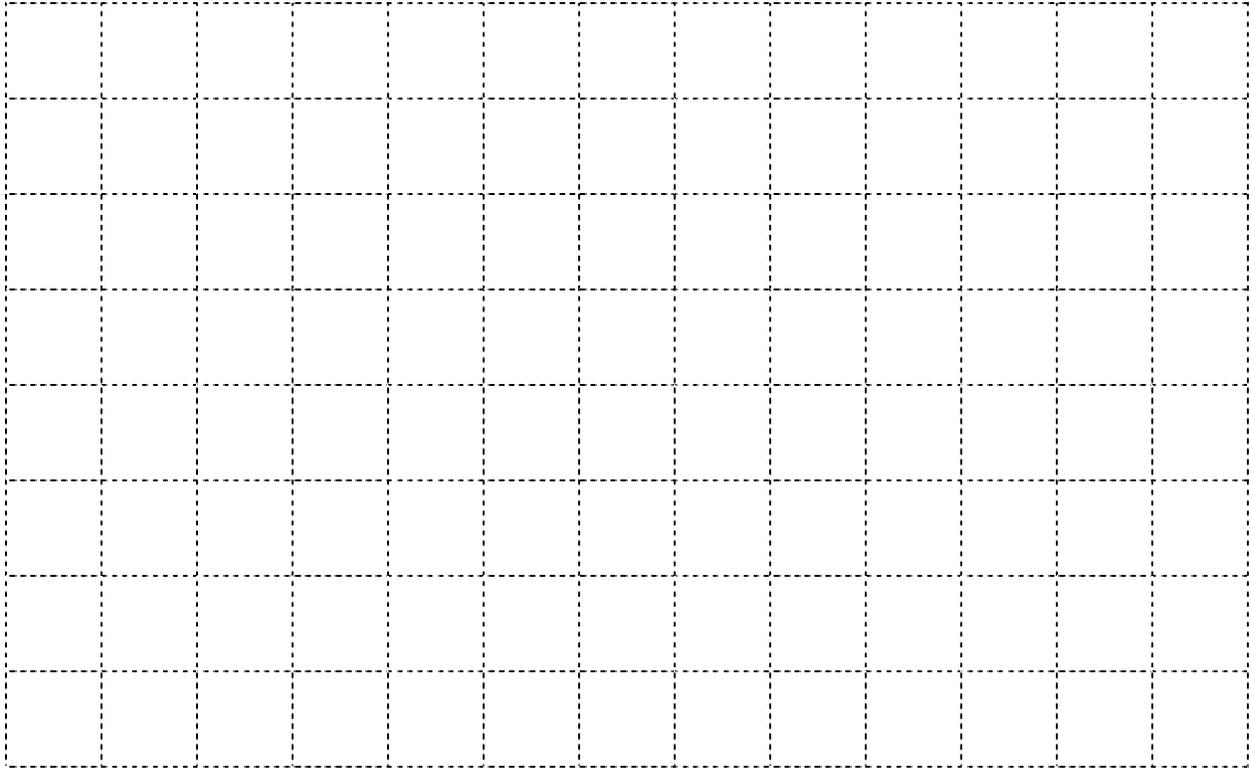
Layout	Field border 1	Field border 2	Field border 3	Field border 4
Border width (feet)				
Border length along edge of field (feet)				
Area (acres)				
Slope (%)				
Species #1				
Species #2				
Species #3				
Species #4				
Seeding rate (pure live seed – lbs/acre)				
Lime (tons/acre)				
N (lbs/acre)				
P ₂ O ₅ (lbs/acre)				
K ₂ O (lbs/acre)				

Site Preparation
<i>Prepare a firm seedbed. Apply lime and fertilizer as indicated by soil testing. Additional requirements:</i>
Planting Method
<i>Drill grass and legume seed _____ inches deep uniformly over area. Establish vegetation according to the specified seeding rate. Additional requirements:</i>
Operation and Maintenance
<i>Maintain original width and length of field border(s). Harvest, mow, reseed, and fertilize as necessary to maintain plant density and vigorous plant growth. Inspect after major storms, remove trapped sediment, and repair eroding areas. Shut off pesticide sprayers when turning on a field border. Additional requirements:</i>

Field Border – Job Sheet

If needed, an aerial view or a side view of the practice can be shown below. Other relevant information, complementary practices and measures, and additional specifications may be included.

Scale 1"= _____ ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size=1/2" by 1/2")



Additional Specifications and Notes:

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