

**Field Border**...a strip of permanent vegetation established at the edge or around the perimeter of a field



Field border, photo courtesy USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Purposes

Field borders can be useful in achieving the following goals:

- Reducing soil erosion from wind and water**
- Protecting soil and water quality**
- Managing harmful or beneficial insect populations**
- Providing wildlife food and cover**

## Benefits

Field borders provide both on-site and off-site benefits to soil, water, air, plants, and animals. Borders protect soil and water resources by reducing erosion caused by wind and water. In addition, they enhance the aesthetics of the field and provide soil stability around the field edge. Borders can also provide limited turn and travel areas for equipment and reduce airborne dust. Field borders are also used to manage insect populations and enhance wildlife objectives by providing food and cover.

## Applications

This practice applies at the edges of cropland fields and at connections to other buffer practices within the field. It may also apply to recreation land or other land uses where crops are grown.

Field borders can eliminate the need to plant end rows in uphill/downhill directions. In addition, field borders can provide a stable area for turning farm machinery and parking implements.

Field borders are most effective when used in combination with other agronomic or structural practices to provide conservation benefits.

## Design and Installation

Design and installation considerations for field borders include choosing appropriate plant material, planting methods, and border dimensions to satisfy the desired objective(s). In addition, it is important to determine and apply any necessary seedbed preparations before planting.

Field borders are normally established by seeding grass species in the spring or fall with a grain or warm season grass drill.

Objectives such as erosion protection, wildlife cover, insect management, forage, or pollution control should be considered when selecting the plant varieties and dimensions of the border area.

## Maintenance

Field borders require management and maintenance for performance and longevity. Management measures can include mowing, weed control, and repair of damaged or traveled areas. Proper maintenance will ensure that the cover is maintained and border plants are not impaired by storm or pesticide damage, excess sediment, or weeds.

## Relative Cost

**Installation**      low ● ○ ○ ○ ○ high

**Maintenance**      low ● ○ ○ ○ ○ high

## For Additional Information...

Visit the Indiana NRCS office online at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>, see the Indiana Job Sheet or the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) standard for (386) Field Border, or contact your local USDA-NRCS office

*Local USDA-NRCS contact information*