

Buffering (Field & River)

Buffering strips/areas placed strategically along water courses will have the following water quality related benefits:

- Remove or restrict access to livestock (if fenced) to eliminate direct inputs and allow greater revegetation.
- Regrowth stabilises and protects the banks of the water course from erosion caused by livestock poaching.
- Captures, traps and filters water loaded with silt and nutrients from the field before it reaches the river.

Other benefits include:

- Can make field management easier by removing awkward, wet areas from production.
- Could be utilised around yard infrastructure also to trap nutrient losses being mobilised.
- Provides a habitat for flora and fauna, boosting biodiversity and reconnecting fragmented areas.



Used in conjunction with woodland planting or fencing, this measure will bring greater habitat enhancement, biodiversity and bankside stability.

Buffer strips or areas

	Guidance
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside any water course where there is direct access • Ensure a suitable buffer of 5-10 meters between the water course and the fence for optimal benefit • Other wet field margins or areas adjacent to yard infrastructure may also be considered
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and manage buffer strips for a period of 10 years • Occasional management may be required eg. to remove Invasive Species etc.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riparian buffer strips – can provide a physical barrier that helps restrict the flow of storm water, carrying sediment and nutrients, and prevents them from being washed from the field into the watercourse • Can be used in both arable and grass fields and give the same result. They also protect the watercourse from erosion, increase biodiversity and prevent poaching • In-field buffer strips, as their name implies, are found adjacent to field boundaries, be they ditches, watercourses, hedges etc. and across fields • They can reduce overland flow reducing soil loss impacting roads and neighbouring properties • Buffer strips that run perpendicular to flow paths will inhibit runoff and hold water tracks
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install during the seasons when the soil is dry and trafficable

Visit wrt.org.uk for more information

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Management for Water Quality

- Buffering allows a small area of a field, next to a water course, to remain uncultivated (potential to also be fenced off) to protect the water course from the effects of livestock and from run-off entering the water.
- A 5 – 10m buffer will allow enough area to filter out much of the sediment carried in run-off.
- It gives the opportunity to also plant trees to further enhance the stability of the banks, the filtration properties of the buffer and improve riparian habitat – where appropriate.

Strategic Buffering and your farm business

Buffering along water courses can reduce the liability of your business to prosecution risk from mildly polluted run-off entering a water course, or to mitigate exceptional weather events.

It can also remove awkward, wet or unproductive areas of a field and allow them to be used for tree planting or other habitat creation – bringing in a small alternative income.

Consents and Licences

It may be necessary to consult with the Environment Agency and/or Natural England when conducting works that directly affect a water course.