Best Management Farming Practices for Water Quality Protection

Filter Strip (393) Fact Sheet

BMP: Vegetation is established to filter sediment

NRCS Practice Standard: Filter Strip (393)

Use filter strips to filter suspended sediment before it reaches a water body. Planting a filter strip is an effective method to prevent sediment from leaving your property and preventing sediment delivery into sensitive areas such as streams and other water bodies. A filter strip will also prevent transport and delivery of nutrients, pesticides and adsorbed contaminants into water bodies. A filter strip should be installed only below areas where sheet and rill erosion have been reduced to an acceptable level and where other practices are in place that slow runoff and contaminant delivery.

Filter Strip (NRCS Conservation Practice Code 393)

Definition: An area of vegetation established for the purpose of removing sediment, organic materials, and other pollutants from runoff.

Purposes:

- To reduce sediment, particulate organics, and sediment adsorbed contaminant loadings in runoff
- To reduce dissolved contaminant loadings in runoff
- To serve as Zone 3 of a Riparian Forest Buffer, Practice Standard 391
- To restore, create or enhance herbaceous habitat for wildlife and beneficial insects
- To maintain or enhance watershed function and value

CONSIDER THIS:

Filter strips are typically positioned down-slope of a field or disturbed area and, to the extent possible, placed on the approximate contour.

Plant grass and legume seed uniformly over area.

Mulch newly seeded filter strips at 1500 lbs of straw/acre.

Use certified weed-free straw.

Consider sowing small grains or other annual grasses as a companion (nurse) crop until establishment.

After establishment, maintain dense vegetation, reseeding when necessary.

Mow filter strips as necessary to encourage dense vegetative growth.

Control undesirable weed species, mow after rainy season.

Inspect and repair after storm events, reseed disturbed areas.

Restore or replant the filter strip if it accumulates so much sediment that it no longer functions effectively.

For more information contact your local NRCS office or visit our website at http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx