



NatureBid Auction Measure Specification **Buffers to Intercept Run-Off**



Buffers are uncropped areas in fields designed to intercept and slow the flow of any run-off and soil from the cultivated/farmed area. Buffers as part of this auction can be used in any location where they will help to alleviate run-off and soil erosion issues. They can be located in fields cropped with spring or winter drilled crops or temporary grassland.

Buffers will need to be established or in place before the crop is drilled, and remain in situ for **18 months after establishment**. The buffers will need to be **established in Spring 2021 and remain in place until the Autumn 2022 harvest**.

How can this option be used?

- Buffer strips can be used anywhere in a field where they are likely to help reduce run-off. For example, they could be used at the bottom of sloping fields, in field margins where high-risk crops such as maize, potatoes, sugar beet, fodder beet or other roots are to be grown, or alternatively, buffers could be placed across a sloping field to help break up the slope to slow the flow of run-off. They could also be used in valley features in fields where run-off or soil erosion has been an issue in the past
- Buffers can also be used alongside watercourses or other receptors to protect them from run-off and the sediment and other field inputs it can carry
- Buffers should be at **least 6m wide** (up to a maximum of 10m wide)
- If you are looking to use this option with an autumn sown crop we may need to adjust the price rate to reflect the period that the buffer will need to remain in situ for, i.e. for winter forage crops the buffer is likely to be required from autumn 2021 until autumn 2022. Please discuss with a FWAG SW Adviser.

Management requirements

- The buffer area should be left uncultivated and without crop establishment for an 18 month period to help slow the flow of runoff in Winter 2021/22
- If you are drilling a crop into a field previously in grass, the grass can be left in situ to provide a buffer strip
- Buffer strips can either be regenerated (left uncropped), or sown to establish a dense grass cover. If regenerated, ensure the ground is not compacted
- Existing non-funded buffer strips can be entered into this measure, provided compaction does not impede infiltration (see below)
- Any compaction in the headland should be removed by subsoiling to ensure infiltration within the buffer area

- Buffer strips should not be cropped (unless with grass as described above), trafficked, stocked or enriched with slurries, manures or fertilisers throughout this period
- If you are using buffers on a temporary grass field, ensure stock are excluded from these areas
- Buffer strips should also not be treated with pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles, or bracken
- Further advice on establishment and seed mix can be provided by FWAG SW

Further information

- This option cannot be used on land already receiving funding from an agri-environment scheme such as under the SW1: 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land
- Payment for this measure will be made upon inspection by a FWAG SW adviser, in Autumn 2021 to ensure buffer is in situ ahead of the winter
- Further inspections may be carried out in the 18 month duration of the measure, to ensure it is being managed according to the specification

