PINPOINT
Rivers Trusts and Farmers tackling water pollution

The Rivers Trust

A clear solution for farmers
CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Best Practice Information Sheet

A joint project between the Environment Agency and Natural England, funded by Defra and the Rural Development Programme for England, working in priority catchments within England.

Land management Sheet 51a

Hedge and Boundary Creation

Why plant and create new boundaries?

Planting hedgerows and physical barriers such as earth mounds can provide various benefits, including:

- Collecting fertiliser and pesticide runoff from fields.
- Reductions in soil erosion and problems with wind blow.
- Providing habitat corridors for wildlife on the farm.
- Acting as a carbon storage.

Steps to success

1. **Review the current situation:**
   - Identify where current hedgerows and boundaries are and review the benefits that they provide.

1. **Identify potential opportunities:**
   - Look at the potential pathways for water and soil movement on farm. Large fields with big catchment areas make ideal areas for new boundaries.
   - Mark where previous events have occurred and historical boundaries were located. Areas that are difficult to farm are worth considering as well.

2. **Calculate the cost-benefit of these opportunities:**
   - Identify the value of lost soil, nutrients and pesticides.
   - Grants are available for planting and creating boundaries through Countryside Stewardship, Hedgerow and Boundary Capital Grants and the Woodland Trust.
   - Providing security and reducing trafficking in vulnerable areas.
   - Slowing the flow of water in extreme events, ultimately leading to reduced clean up costs associated with flooding.

4. **Implement the action plan:**
   - Follow all guidance and legislation in terms of planting and soil movements.
   - Use species relevant to the local area and conditions.
   - Use young stock and buy native plants if possible.
   - Prepare the site thoroughly and plant when trees are dormant.
   - Maintain areas after planting and make sure new bunds and boundaries are vegetated quickly.

5. **Monitor progress:**
   - Check the condition of the new plants or bunds.
   - Monitor soil and water movements after rainfall.

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Practical Examples

Reducing Runoff from arable fields

A field of 42 ha was regularly experiencing runoff, which was causing valuable soil and nutrient losses.

A review of the catchment area found that splitting the field in two, inserting a new hedgerow along the contour of the field in the middle and another one at the base of the field, would prevent these runoff events. The project was supported by a Countryside Stewardship Scheme Grant of £11.60 per metre.

Native species were sown e.g. Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Hazel, as well as Field Maple. It was estimated that the work produced yearly savings of £70 per ha as a result of reduced surface erosion, and £150 per year was saved due to reduced clean up costs on a nearby road after flood events.

The hedgerow also provided breeding habitats and food sources all year for farm wildlife.

Reducing Wind erosion of Soils

On light, sandy soils, an arable farm was experiencing wind and surface erosion due to large, open fields in the East of England.
A plan was put in place to look at optimal field size for machinery access and operations whilst making parcels smaller through new hedgerows and beetle banks.
The work was funded through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme Mid Tier Grant at £11.60 a metre.
The hedges were planted in November and weed management was key over the first 3 years.

Remember

- In many cases dealing with causes such as roof water is relatively inexpensive and can provide a rapid payback period for the costs incurred
- Keeping clean water out of dirty water storage helps reduce storage pressure and the risk of causing water pollution
- You may be able to make further savings by using the clean water from roofs for purposes such as washingyards

This information sheet is part of a series providing farmers with advice on land management practices to protect water bodies, produced by The Rivers Trust with support from Catchment Sensitive Farming. The advice will also enable farmers to use farm resources more efficiently and help meet Nitrate Vulnerable Zone and Soil Protection Review requirements under Cross Compliance and environmental regulation.. Information for these sheets was provided through the Broadland Catchment Partnership and Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnerships Water Sensitive Farming project.

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