



OSR Herbicides?
Think Water

Reducing run-off with grass buffer strips

Oilseed rape plays a valuable part in many farm rotations as a break and 'cleaning' crop, especially where black-grass is a problem. However, keeping herbicides out of drinking water sources is key to preventing restrictions on use, or even loss of the products.

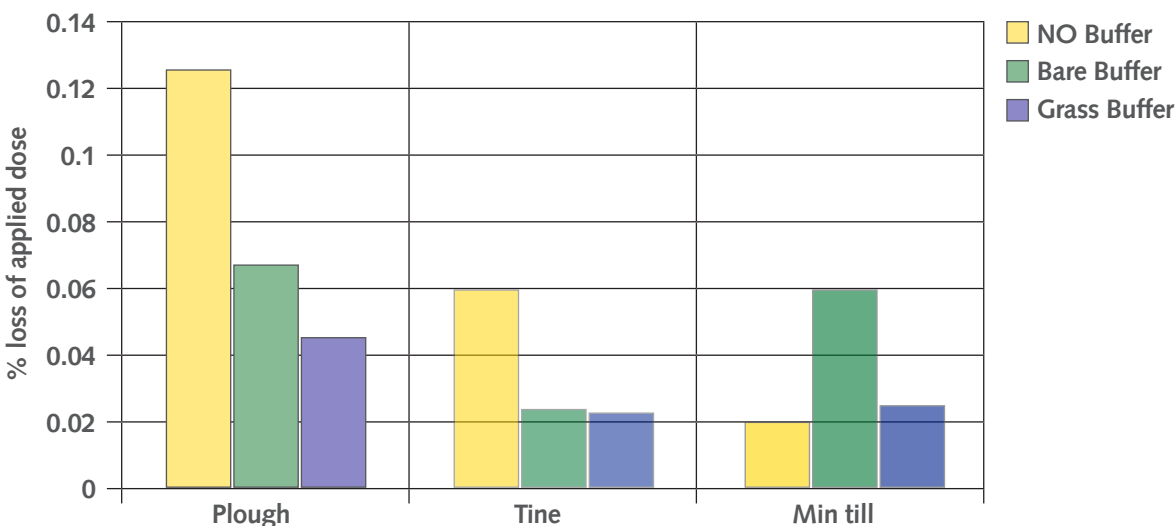
THE KEY HERBICIDES

carbetamide
clopyralid
metazachlor
propyzamide
quinmerac

Why do grass buffer strips matter?

Grass buffer strips are areas of land with permanent vegetation that slow run-off and allow time for drainage. Usually established beside watercourses, they can be effective when established in fields across slopes to interrupt flows down long slopes. Grass buffer strips can reduce run-off losses by at least 50%.

Effect of buffer strips on loss of applied propyzamide



For more information on margins, mixtures and management see:
<http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk/media/1278/bpamargins.pdf>

Grass buffer strips adjacent to watercourses need to be well established to be effective. Therefore, they should be planted at least a year before sowing a winter oilseed rape or winter bean crop. Grass buffer strips should be a minimum of 6m wide measured from the top of the watercourse bank. The wider the better. The 6m can include the minimum of 2m for Cross Compliance.

Where fields slope down to watercourses, buffer strips of 12m to 24m wide should be considered. Where fields include long, steep slopes, consider establishing fallow strips along the contours to reduce downhill flow.



Establishing a grass buffer





Sow a standard grass mixture or one agreed in any stewardship plan. If possible use different grass species, legumes and wildflowers to benefit biodiversity.

Many buffer strip options may be eligible for payments under various schemes such as Countryside Stewardship.

For more information on options and payments see:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guide-to-cross-compliance-in-england-2016>
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562030/BPS_2016_scheme_rules_v2.pdf
- <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/4m-to-6m-buffer-strip-on-cultivated-land-sw1>
- <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/12m-to-24m-watercourse-buffer-strip-on-cultivated-land-sw4>

Looking after the grass buffer strip

-  Follow any stewardship scheme advice/requirements.
-  Make sure there are no breaks, gateways, tracks or 'grips' (temporary channels) through the strip as these will channel water creating an erosion problem and undo the benefits of the strip.
-  Inspect buffer strips in the winter during heavy rain and when fields are at capacity. Check if they are reducing or slowing down surface runoff and if soil particles are being deposited.
-  Do not dig 'grips' to drain standing water from the field

Use this check list to review your actions

Objective	Detailed actions or issues	YOUR ASSESSMENT				
		I'm doing this	Maybe I could do this	Not doing this	I will investigate	Not applicable
Reduce run-off	6m or more grass buffer strips in OSR fields	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Buffer strips planted at least a year ahead of OSR crop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Buffer strips are looked after to protect efficacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Buffer strips checked during heavy rain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Wider buffers strips installed on long runs in sloping fields	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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The
Voluntary
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Promoting responsible pesticide use