

Riparian Margin and Riparian Margin (Sheep fencing)

Objective

To help protect water quality by intercepting the loss of sediment and nutrients from soil surfaces after they have been mobilised. This measure also takes small areas out of production, thereby reducing the nutrient load while also supporting biodiversity.

Site suitability

- This action can only be selected on parcels with an Eligible hectare > 0.
- This action is available on CP and Non-CP LPIS parcels that will be claimed by the participant for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
- On CP forage Parcels, this action can only be selected on fields with the following scorecards assigned or submitted: Grassland, Rough Grazing, Coastal, Winterage, Peatland, Scrub/Woodland, Low Input Peat Grassland, Corncrake, or Cough.
- This action cannot be selected within an archaeological monument buffer.
- In Non-CP parcels this action is not available on areas that are SAC/SPAs, NHAs, pNHAs, Annex 1 Grasslands or Breeding Wader Hotspots.
- Riparian margin can only be created adjacent to small streams, surface drains, rivers, lakes, and ponds and should be targeted to high risk areas for example areas on the farm identified in the EPA Pollution Impact Potential-Phosphorus (PIP-P) maps (Rank 1-3) and verified as a flow delivery pathway for surface runoff to an adjacent watercourse.

Note 11: Where an investment has been grant aided under TAMS or any other National/EU funded Agri-environment or Capital investment Scheme from 01 January 2018, this cannot fulfil part of the requirement for this ACRES NPI action.

Fencing-Barbed Wire, Fencing- Permanent Electric or Fencing-Sheep Wire NPIs cannot be used to fulfil the fencing requirement of this ACRES NPI.

Requirements

1. Erect a permanent fence to create riparian margin at least 3m wide. Select Riparian Margin if opting for post and wire fencing for bovines/equines or select Riparian Margin (Sheep fencing) if sheep fencing is required to create the margin.
2. The location and length (metres) must be identified on the LPIS parcel(s) and marked on the map submitted. Each margin applied for is only eligible for one NPI payment and once claimed must be maintained in the same location for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
3. To be eligible for this action, the minimum continuous length to be delivered is 10m. Riparian margin width is measured from the top of the bank or from the edge of an existing boundary (i.e. hedgerow, treeline, stone wall, or earthen bank) into the field. Where scrub is present, the margin width can be inclusive of scrub. The Riparian margin is in addition to any mandatory baseline requirements for applicable watercourses on the holding e.g. Certain holdings are required to excluded bovines

from applicable watercourses by fencing 1.5m from top of the bank under SMR2. In this case to be eligible for NPI Riparian Margin 3m watercourse would need to be fenced 4.5m from top of the bank.

4. Fencing posts must consist of timber or alternative metal/PVC/concrete posts, it is not permitted to attach wire fencing directly to trees.
5. If selecting Riparian Margin sheep fencing the lowest line of the sheep wire mesh must be 100mm above ground level to allow adequate clearance for wildlife.
6. The Riparian margin must be fenced off and stock proof to exclude all livestock and maintained for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
7. Chemical or organic fertiliser cannot be applied to the Riparian margin.
8. Pesticides and herbicides are not permitted, except for the spot treatment of noxious/invasive weeds.
9. Cutting is permitted but cannot take place between March 1st and August 31st.

Additional guidance

- An access point into the margin is advised to allow for management/maintenance if advised, as some margins may require cutting and removal of vegetation to reduce nutrient load.
- The use of heavy machinery should be avoided within 2m of the bank.
- Riparian margins are very susceptible to non-native invasive species e.g., Himalayan balsam and Giant hogweed. Monitor the riparian margin and carry out appropriate management/ removal of non-native invasive species where necessary.
- The fence should be placed at least 1m out from any riparian margin trees planted to prevent damage by livestock.