

Buffer Strips

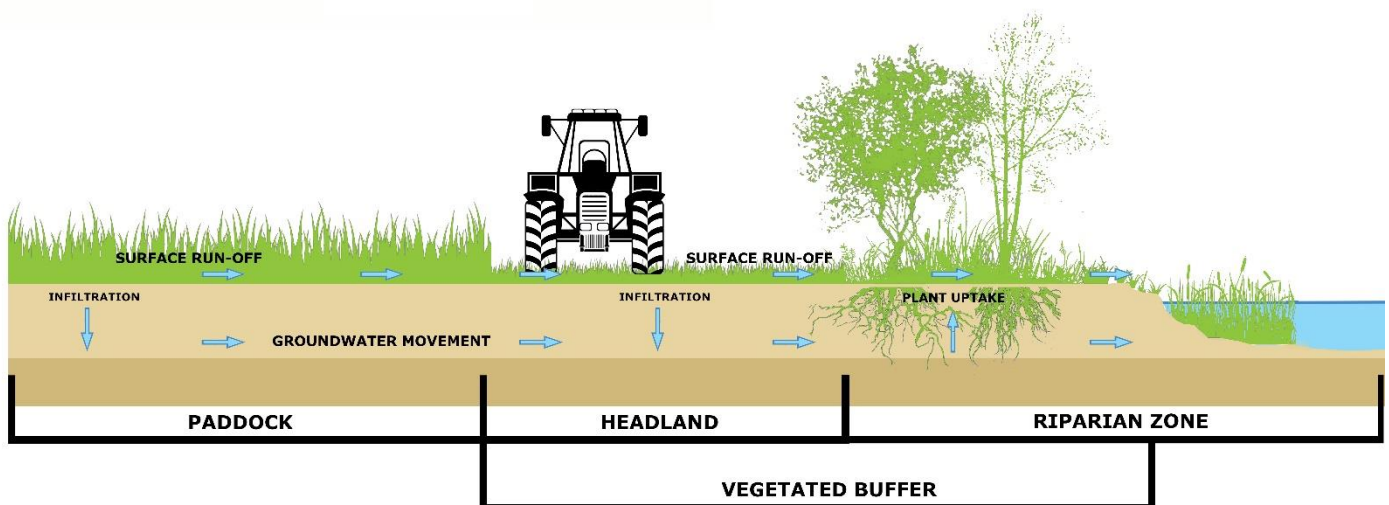
To reduce nutrient, sediment and pesticides from leaving the farm, vegetated areas known as buffer strips can be implemented along waterways on the property.

A buffer strip is simply a vegetated area that disperses water as it leaves the paddock, this slows the flow of run-off and acts as a filter system.

Given that any vegetated area can be classed as a buffer strip, efficiency is dependent on the species and condition of vegetation present as well as width and slope of the strip. Grassed headlands are a good example of this system.

Buffer strips are most effective against sediment loss by trapping soil particles as the water passes through the vegetation. They can also play a part in removing nutrients and pesticides from surface water run-off before it reaches the waterway.

Buffer strips increase surface water infiltration which may carry dissolved nutrients and pesticides. The nutrients can then be taken up by the vegetation as well as saturating soil particles to provide suitable conditions for denitrification (a process that transforms nitrate into nitrogen gas). Infiltration also slows down the movement of pesticides into waterways allowing a longer breakdown period before they impact on the environment.



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