# CSP And CRP Field Borders

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Field borders are strips of permanent vegetation established at the edge or around the perimeter of a field. Vegetation consists of adapted grasses, legumes, and/or shrubs. Field borders are normally established as part of a conservation management system to address the soil, water, air, plant, and animal needs, including wildlife, and the owner's objectives. Field borders can save on input costs, reduce erosion, provide beneficial insect production, and improve farm aesthetics.

Field borders can also enhance wildlife habitat. Benefits depend on the vegetative species used and management practiced. Native grasses and wildflowers provide food and cover for important wildlife. Proper management of field borders provides optimum habitat conditions and the necessary protection for nesting animals from predators.

It is important to remember what the purpose of the field border is in order to apply a maintenance regime to the field border. Farm-Bill programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) require a mid contract management practice to be applied to some of the acres in the field border annually in order to create that habitat. Prescribed burning, light disking, and chemical applications are all approved methods that can be used to manage your field borders. Mowing is only allowed as a component of the required management practice. Timing of each practice is equally important when focusing on wildlife habitat.

Field borders are most effective when used in combination with other agronomic or structural practices to provide conservation benefits. Unharvested grain and shrubby cover are two practices that are used in conjunction with field borders. Through the Conservation Security Program (CSP) landowners were given enhancement payments to leave standing grain adjacent to their field border to increase habitat quality. Crops such as soybeans, corn, sunflowers, and milo provide excellent wildlife food and cover. Δ

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