

PRO2 Standard Margins and Areas

Why is this good for water quality?

The aim-

This option aims to protect watercourses by buffering them from field operations such as spray drift and fertiliser applications. Dense vegetation slows surface water flow, allowing sediment to settle and improve infiltration which helps to protect waterbodies from pollution.

Why is this good for my farm?

Margins help protect field edges from compaction and machinery damage, helping to preserve soil structure. They also support insect biodiversity, enhancing natural pest control.

PRO2 Standard Margins and Areas

Payment Rate: £300/ha/yr

Specification

- Margins must be at least 6 m wide (and be in addition to current statutory requirements) and must be along watercourses or seasonal ditches in arable fields or improved grassland.
- Pre-existing watercourse margins are permitted if suitable and being well managed, and not being funded by other grant schemes.
- All margins and areas will need to be approved by your local Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.
- When used within the field as erosion disruptors they must be located in high risk areas for surface runoff .
- In the first year of the agreement margins should be sown to a suitable grass mix, including some tussock forming species such as Cocksfoot, or allowed to naturally regenerate where the anticipated weed burden is felt to be manageable.
- Once established, no pesticides, fertiliser or lime can be applied to the grass margin and no grazing is permitted. Spot treatment for non-native, invasive and pernicious weeds is allowed.
- Margins may be used for essential maintenance (hedge cutting, ditch maintenance, etc.), but not as regular access routes as these can become water pathways and actually speed up surface runoff.
- Margins and areas are most effective when left unmown, cutting for invasive weeds and woody growth is permitted. Margins must enter the autumn/winter as thick vegetation.
- Applicants are expected to complete the action in a way that could be reasonably expected to achieve the actions aim.
- 5-year (2025-2030) agreement, with annual payments and evidence collection

Evidence to apply

- Maps showing where the margin or area is to be established
- Agreed seed mixture evidence or image to show natural regeneration
- Before photos showing the area where the work is being undertaken
- ALERT tool mapping to show location of watercourses being protected or overland flow being disrupted

Evidence to claim

- After photos showing the established areas