

PRO3 3D Enhanced Margins and Areas

Why is this good for water quality?

The aim-

This option aims to improve the water quality benefits of standard grass margins. In specific locations, standard grass margins can easily be overwhelmed by heavy rains, with field runoff simply running over the top. A 3D field margin adds layers such as trees, shrubs, and deep-rooted plants that slow water, improve infiltration, and trap pollutants. These roots also hold soil together and support microbes that help break down harmful substances reducing runoff and pollution to watercourses.

Why is this good for my farm?

Dense vegetation such as trees and shrubs slows down rainfall and surface runoff, helping keep soil and valuable inputs like fertilisers in place. 3D field margins create habitats for wildlife and beneficial insects, which can reduce the need for pesticides. They are also a beneficial way to make use of unproductive areas, for example cutting grass to provide fodder during dry periods.

PRO3 3D Enhanced Margins and Areas

Payment Rate: £600/ha/yr

3D margins or buffers are features that include tree planting or additional 'engineered' design features such as incorporating ridges and swales. 3D margins intercept pollution below ground as runoff travels over the soil surface and also above ground in the vegetation canopy.

Specification

- Proposed margins and areas must meet all the criteria for PRO2: Standard Margins and area as a minimum. In most instances the enhanced option would likely be paired with a standard margin, having been sited to intercept surface water flows.
- To qualify for the higher payment, 3D enhanced margins and areas will need to include active interventions such as tree and shrub planting.
- Planting should aim to establish a range of vegetation heights though species selection or future management. Too dense a tree canopy can shade out field layer plants, lowering the margins filtering ability.
- To maintain flexibility precise planting plans will not be specified but must be shown capable of preventing pollution above and beyond a standard margin. Your ST advisor will offer you guidance here.
- Effective margins can work so well at filtering out nutrients they need active management, such as an annual hay cut, if they are not to become a source of nutrients themselves.
- Proposals will need to be site specific and prepared with the involvement of you ST Agricultural Advisor and possibly outside expertise will need to be brought in.
- This is a new and experimental option for Severn Trent so each agreement will need to be bespoke to each farm's requirements and proposals.
- AMP period agreement, with annual payment 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
- EA ALERT tool mapping to show location of watercourses being protected or overland flow being disrupted

Evidence to claim

- After photos showing the established areas
- Copies of permissions from Local Authority, Environment Agency, as appropriate
- Copies of relevant paid invoices
- Annual site visits and approval from your ST Agricultural Advisor

NOTE - Changes to land adjacent to watercourses are heavily regulated, with the aim of ensuring activities do not cause problems downstream or damage existing archaeology or biodiversity.