

Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District

Fact Sheet

Harvestable Filter Strip Program



A filter strip is an area of vegetation situated between a cropped area and a waterbody. Filter strips slow water flow causing sediment, nutrients, and chemicals to collect in the vegetation before entering the waterbody. The Dakota County SWCD Harvestable Filter Strip Program provides Dakota County landowners with the option to improve water quality and wildlife habitat on their property, while retaining the ability to harvest the vegetation within the filter strip. After harvest, the vegetation could be fed to livestock, sold as hay or bedding, or sold for biomass energy production.

Eligibility:

- The Harvestable Filter Strip Program eligibility requirements are the same as the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) site location and crop history standards. Generally these standards require the property to be located adjacent to a waterbody and planted to an agricultural commodity at least 4 of the 6 crop years, from 1996 to 2001. SWCD staff completes all eligibility determinations.
- The minimum filter strip width eligible for payment is 30-feet. The maximum filter strip width eligible for payment is 120-feet.
- Landowners enrolled in the SWCD's general Filter Strip Program or the Dakota County Farmland and Natural Areas Program are not eligible for the Harvestable Filter Strip Program.

Payments:

- The SWCD pays \$100 per acre per year for the establishment of the harvestable filter strip.
- The landowner can choose anywhere between a 10 to 15 year contract.
- The total contract payment is made in one lump sum when the filter strip seeding has been completed and certified. All certifications are made by SWCD staff and all payments must be approved by the SWCD Board of Supervisors.

Landowner Responsibilities:

- The filter strip must be established, operated, and maintained according to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide Standards.
- Harvesting within the filter strip is allowed only after August 1st each year, to avoid the primary nesting season.
- The minimum remaining vegetation height after harvest is 6-inches for cool season grasses and legumes, and 10-inches for native warm season grasses and forbs.
- The cost of the site preparation, seed, planting, and maintenance of the filter strip is the landowner's responsibility.
- The landowner must control all noxious weeds within the filter strip.
- If the land is sold or transferred before the contract period expires, the seller must inform the new landowner of the contract, and the new landowner must maintain the filter strip for the remaining contract period.
- If the filter strip is not maintained through the life of the contract, the landowner must pay back all payments made by the SWCD.

Process:

Landowners interested in the Dakota County SWCD Harvestable Filter Strip Program should complete the following steps:

1. Contact the SWCD to determine preliminary eligibility, filter strip location, and payment.
2. Sign a Harvestable Filter Strip Program contract.
3. The contract must be approved by the SWCD Board of Supervisors.



DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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