

**466.4 Conservation buffer strip program.**

1. As used in this section, “*conservation buffer strip*” means a riparian buffer, filter strip, waterway, contour buffer strip, shallow water area for wildlife, field border, or any vegetative barrier on private land that meets the criteria established by the United States department of agriculture, natural resources conservation service.

2. *a.* The department of agriculture and land stewardship, in consultation with the department of natural resources, shall establish a program to accelerate the United States department of agriculture’s program to install conservation buffer strips in this state.

*b.* The department of agriculture and land stewardship shall request waivers from the United States department of agriculture to initiate projects that reward landowners maintaining current conservation practices. The goal of the projects is to discourage the destruction of existing conservation buffer strips and to monetarily reward landowners who maintain quality conservation practices. If the waivers are granted, up to twenty-five percent of the program resources shall be committed to establishing projects.

*c.* The department of agriculture and land stewardship shall request a waiver from the United States department of agriculture for the purpose of establishing that a person who is subject to a twenty-five percent reduction in conservation buffer strip payments due to grazing shall be allowed ninety days to graze animals.

*d.* The department of natural resources shall establish a prairie seed harvest program to assist in the restoration of prairies and provide for private land stewardship and public resource management through assistance with the implementation of buffer and filter strip practices, and public or private habitat development and management. The department shall carry out these efforts through landowner contacts and cooperation with private and public organizations.

*e.* The five-year goal of the conservation buffer strip program shall be to meet the objective of water quality improvement by enrolling an additional four hundred seven thousand five hundred acres.

2000 Acts, ch 1068, §4