

Experimental determination of the effectiveness of unfertilized grass buffer strips in the Netherlands

Marius Heinen, Gert-Jan Noij, Hanneke Heesmans

Alterra, Wageningen University and Research Centre, Wageningen, the Netherlands

Like in many other countries, source measures are not enough in the Netherlands, to reduce P loads to surface waters below the required levels for environmental goals. Several alternative measures are being investigated to mitigate P loads. One of the suggested measures is to apply an unfertilized buffer strip. This poster presents experimental data from a research project that was initiated in response to an agreement made between the Netherlands and the European Union. Brussels suggests 5 m wide buffer zones along waterways, but the Netherlands wish to investigate their effectiveness first. P loads to the ditch appear to be highly variable in space and time. This is primarily caused by the discharge (as opposed to P concentration). There appears to be an effect of buffer strips on some locations and in some seasons, but this effect is not (yet?) consistent in time for every field location.