

BALANCING FOOD SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Opportunities for Co-management - Hedgerows

This is one of a series of resource sheets for food safety auditors that describe conservation practices commonly used in agriculture's production environment.

Images of Hedgerows¹ in the agricultural production environment



This information will help you to

Recognize hedgerows in the agricultural environment.

Understand the purposes hedgerows serve in the agricultural environment.

Recognize the language growers may use to explain why hedgerows are important in their production environment.

Understand when audit standards may consider hedgerows as addressing farming impacts on the environment and biodiversity and/or as potential contributors to food safety risk.

Hedgerows are living fences of shrubs or trees in, across, or around a field. Hedgerows are generally planted adjacent to but are not part of the production field.

¹ This practice is currently listed as [Hedgerow Planting #422](#) by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NRCS National Practice Standards are updated regularly. Some states may include additional guidance; consult your local NRCS field office.

Hedgerows may be used for multiple purposes in the agricultural environment, depending on design and management. Depending upon design, they may be used to delineate field boundaries, [sustain or enhance beneficial insects](#), [\(video on pollinator hedgerows\)](#), serve as [replacement vegetation](#) for weedy field edges, serve as wind and dust barriers depending on their construction, provide wildlife food and cover, or improve aesthetics. Species selection is carefully considered to minimize impacts to crops. Native plants are encouraged. Hedgerows do not generally remove land from production although there are [costs associated with planting and maintenance](#). Guidelines for growers on [establishing hedgerows](#) are available.

Advantages ¹	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces soil erosion by wind • Provides beneficial insect habitat • Enhances wildlife habitat, especially when native species are used • Reduces wind damage to crop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May shade adjacent crop • May provide habitat for rodent, bird, or insect pests

¹From [Farm Water Quality Management Practice Sheet](#) Hedgerow Planting #422

In some audit standards these practices may help producers to demonstrate knowledge of the impacts of farming on the environment including offsite movement of soil and control of fugitive dust, and efforts to maintain biodiversity. They may trigger concerns about animal activity, fecal contamination, or proximity to habitat for wildlife.

Scenarios

Cropped area adjacent to Hedgerow is included in routine and pre-harvest monitoring for evidence of fecal contamination and/or animal activity.

Additional Resources

[Balancing Food Safety and Sustainability: Opportunities for Co-management](#)

[Hedgerows enhance beneficial insects on farms in California's Central Valley, 2011](#)

[Establishing hedgerows on farms in California, 2010](#)

Articles of interest

Brodts, S., K. Klonsky, L. Jackson, S. B. Brush and S. Smukler. 2009. Factors affecting adoption of hedgerows and other biodiversity-enhancing features on farms in California, USA. *Agroforestry Systems* 76 (1) 195-206 [DOI: 10.1007/s10457-008-9168-8](#)

Additional resources on co-management of food safety and sustainability may be found at on the UC Food Safety Website under the [Pre- and Post-Harvest Produce](#) link. You can also contact Mary Bianchi, UC Cooperative Extension Emeritus Farm Advisor in San Luis Obispo County at mlbianchi@ucanr.edu.

It is the policy of the University of California (UC) and the UC Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities (Complete nondiscrimination policy statement can be found at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/files/215244.pdf>). Inquiries regarding ANR's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to John I. Sims, Affirmative Action Compliance Officer/Title IX Officer, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1397.