



Green cover and buffer strips



Establishing new hedgerows and tree shelter belts

Hedgerows and tree shelter belts act as natural boundaries that can trap nutrients and sediment, reducing runoff into watercourses. Tree shelter belts can aid ammonia capture and dispersal. This measure will either be landowner led or will need significant landowner involvement and long-term planning.

Benefits: Creates natural boundaries and wildlife habitat, improving farm biodiversity.

Barriers: Requires dedicated space—potentially reducing the rentable land area—along with labour and ongoing investment.

Landlord involvement needed: Yes (long term maintenance and investment).

Pig welfare: Provides shade, shelter, diet diversity and enrichment, reduces stress and supports natural behaviours.

Benefit areas

-  Water quality
-  Air quality
-  Soil quality
-  Climate

Practical Tips

- Choose suitable species and locations.
- Landowners must plan for long-term maintenance.
- Comply with hedge-cutting rules.



Buffer strips

Strips of vegetation between fields, watercourses and stocked areas that trap sediment and nutrients, reducing runoff. Buffer strips are particularly useful for slowing down any nutrient and faecal indicator organisms (FIO) losses on sloping fields.

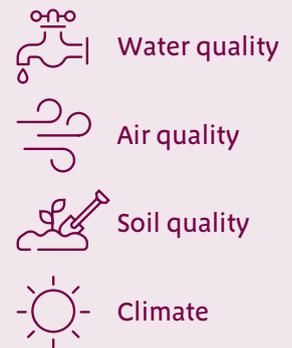
Benefits: Low maintenance once established, and creates natural boundaries and wildlife habitat, improving farm biodiversity.

Barriers: Requires space, investment, and landowner permission; weed control can be an issue.

Landlord involvement needed: Yes

Pig welfare: No direct impact.

Benefit areas



Practical Tips

- Place along contours or slopes e.g., T-bar shape to intercept runoff where natural valleys channel water.
- Plan width and shape based on runoff risk (6m standard; increased on slopes).
- Maintain every few years and manage weeds.

Maintaining green cover

Keeping grass or legume cover in paddocks reduces bare soil, improves soil structure and water retention, helping to reduce leaching and runoff of nutrients, sediment, and faecal indicator organisms (FIO). This measure is common and is often a requirement under supply contracts.

Benefits: Reduces erosion, lowers ground temperatures, provides forage, and can lower bedding costs as pigs spend more time grazing.

Barriers: Takes time to establish and requires ongoing management.

Landlord involvement needed: Yes

Pig welfare: Encourages natural grazing, reduces stress, improves gut health, and keeps ground cooler.

Benefit areas



Practical Tips

- Choose resilient grass mixes.
- Consider adjusting stocking rates and providing rotational grazing.
- Maintain cover around feeders and troughs.

Use our simple [Excel tool](#) and [guidance manual](#) to assess the economic impact of introducing some of these options on your outdoor pig unit.