

# Field Borders Serve Many Purposes



Photo by Lavourn Wiggins

Shown above is Reagan Ammons, Polk County Extension Chairman admiring a fescue field border on the Claudy Pack farm in the Fox Mountain Community. The field is used to grow corn silage.

Topsoil is precious and fertilizer and other chemicals are costly to North Carolina farmers, so a continuing effort should be made to keep both the soil and farm chemicals in place, despite heavy rains that sometimes cause erosion. One of the best ways to do the job is by installing a conservation practice known as a field border. If you look at a field border during the season when row crops are not growing, it will look like a grassy "collar" around the edge of each cultivated field.

The field border is a strip of perennial (lasting) vegetation between cropland and any other kind of land, including woods, drainage ditches, or even a passing road. It comes in varying widths, from 10 up to 30 feet wide. The wider strips can be grazed or mowed for hay, depending on the decision of the farm operator — but the same goal is accomplished in each case. The grassed strip will catch and hold topsoil and chemicals that might tend to wash out of a field during heavy rains. After 3 or 4 years this soil can be scraped up and put back on the field where it is needed, thus saving the topsoil as well as the valuable nutrients it contains. Without a field border, both topsoil and fertilizer are washed out of the field and into our lakes and streams where they become pollutants.

Tractor operators see the borders as a handy place to turn

their heavy equipment before making another pass across the field. The border also serves as a travelway for farmers to inspect their fields for insect control, weed control, drainage and other problems. Even during wet periods, when travel around fields would normally be difficult or impossible, field borders will greatly improve access.

Besides the benefits the farmer anticipates immediately, there are other advantages. Game birds and wildlife often consider field borders their "home" and a place to feed. When various types of wildlife use a border, care in mowing is required.

Landowners can create field borders with various plantings. Such grasses and other vegetation as Common Bermuda, Tall Fescue, Ladino Clover, Weeping Lovegrass, Sericea Lespedeza, Shrub Lespedeza, Orchardgrass and other plantings are practical in this area.

Soil Conservation Service technical assistance is readily available in Polk County to help people decide on dimensions and plant materials for field borders. Make plans now to plant borders around the fields on your farm this year. Keep your soil in the field — where it belongs. — Lavourn Wiggins, District Conservationist

### YESTERDAY

The brown earth turned green  
A Robin sang.  
I drank water from a spring.  
looking around to see.  
My good neighbor shook hands with me.

Ettie Johnson

## TAXPAYERS WANT HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

State Senator R. P. (Bo) Thomas, speaking at the North Carolina School Board Association District 17 dinner, cautioned that we must do better with what we have. "A wave of conservatism is sweeping North Carolina," Thomas said. "Our people do not have enough purchasing power; and they are looking to their leaders, including school administrators, for higher productivity and a better finished product. We will need courage in the general assembly to pay for cost of living salary increases and maintenance of school plants in the inflationary eighties. The taxpayers are in no mood to pay for waste or duplication."

"The lack of courage in much of our leadership is the direct cause for our declining productivity, reduced purchasing power, low capital formation level, and unreasonable family dissolution rate. In nearly all family units, two paychecks are needed to meet the obligations," Thomas stated. "In many instances, two working parents do not provide the individual attention to their children that our generation received."

"The single parent family is a major American crisis and is the greatest challenge to the development of an excellent product by our secondary school establishment. We need to fund smaller teacher-pupil ratios and to consider lengthening the school year for elementary age children," Thomas said.

Thomas proposed a "Partial Medical Reimbursement Plan" for state employees as an inflation break. He stated that as part of their promised cost of living increase, he recommends educators' approval of his proposed legislation that would permit the state disbursement officer to allocate \$1,000 of each employee's income to medical reimbursement. He stated that this will save a state employee, with income of \$12,000.00 per annum with two dependents, \$310.90 per year, provided he does have medical, dental or ophthalmic expense of this account. If the state employee's approved expense does not total at least \$1,000.00, the state employee would be required to pay the prescribed state and federal tax on the remaining portion.

## Garden Clinic

N. C. State University Answer Timely Gardening Questions

Q. Yellow bellied sapsuckers are making holes in our trees mostly maples and pines. trees die and what can we do? E., Ayden)

A. No, your trees will not and there is nothing you about the sapsuckers. Sapsuckers peck the bark of healthy to make them bleed sweet They will later eat both the and the sap-eating insects accumulate in the peck Some of the most prolific bleeders are pines, maples, walnuts, hickories, pecans dogwoods. This is why you notice more sapsuckers associated with these trees in late and early spring than with species. Sapsuckers are no to a healthy tree, and unhealthy trees don't have enough sap to attract their attention. all, a dead tree is no good sapsucker. (Jim McGraw, tension forestry specialist)

Q. Kudzu is all over my How can I get rid of it? Cherryville)

A. Kudzu can be killed by close, continuous mowing — one inches. Also, 2, 4-D sprayed on young kudzu leaves is effective in killing both the tops and roots. (Carl Blake, extension agronomist)

Q. What could cause greens to wilt after growing about five inches? (M. Raleigh)

A. Chances are your turnips have the "damping off." This disease is caused by one several rotting organisms. touch with your county agricultural extension agent, who identify the disease or help get it identified. (George Hughes, extension horticulturist)

Homemakers use twice much energy to prepare food farmers use to grow it, according to Sperry New Holland.

The U. S. is the world's leading cheese producer. Output reached 1.7 million tons last according to the Department Agriculture.

Your water heater is efficient when clean. Once month, drain out 2-3 gallons water to remove rust sediment. This saves energy extends water heater life.