

What exactly is a buffer zone? Our neighboring farmers are using pesticides (in one case just Round-up on a farm across the street, and I am not sure what on the other side of us) for corn. Do we need to stay a certain number of feet from where their planting ends, or do we need to have plants, or a windscreen to separate us? One certifier told us that it is our responsibility to determine how to protect product. We don't know what this means.

Buffer zones are defined under the NOP regulations (§ 205.2), as "an area located between a certified production operation or portion of a production operation and an adjacent land area that is not maintained under organic management. A buffer zone must be sufficient in size or other features (e.g., windbreaks or a diversion ditch) to prevent the possibility of unintended contact by prohibited substances applied to adjacent land areas with an area that is part of a certified operation."

Producers are also required to comply with land requirements for buffer zones under § 205.202(c), which require them to "have distinct, defined boundaries, and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management."

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