

New Jersey

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of New Jersey are partnering to implement a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 30,000 acres of agricultural land in the Delaware and Wallkill Watersheds and the Northeast, Raritan, and Atlantic regions within the New Jersey CREP that drain toward the Atlantic Ocean. The purpose of the New Jersey CREP is to improve water quality, reduce impairment from agricultural non-point sources, and restore ecological functions of New Jersey streams.

Background

CREP is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish permanent, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and develop wildlife habitat. In return, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

With CREP, high-priority conservation goals are identified by the state, and then federal funds are supplemented with non-federal funds to achieve those goals.

Through the New Jersey CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 10- to 15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production

and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. This will improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen, and other pollutants from entering streams and rivers, and enhance wildlife habitat in the area.

Goals

The goals of the New Jersey CREP include:

- Addressing non-point source pollution from agricultural runoff by annually reducing 26,000 pounds of phosphorous and 7 million pounds of Total Suspended Solids (dirt and other foreign particles)
- Maintaining and restoring ecological functions of streams by reducing biological impairment and improving water quality
- Maintaining a high level of water quality in unimpaired streams through the prevention of additional pollutants
- Enhancing farm viability
- Establishing permanent easements to aid in reaching the state’s open-space goals

Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP8A, Grass Waterways
- CP15A, Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover (Contour Grass Strips)
- CP21, Filter Strips
- CP22, Riparian Buffers

For More Information

CREP is one option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may also enroll land in CRP through the general, continuous, or grassland signups; however, CREP may provide additional benefits not available through those signup types such as higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

For more information on this project, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.

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Farm Service Agency**
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Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the New Jersey CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in New Jersey. Land must be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Cropland must meet cropping history criteria according to current FSA National CRP Directives and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Payments

Under the New Jersey CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) is paid in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives for land enrolled in CP8A, CP21, and CP22 practices
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of eligible reimbursable costs incurred for installation of CP8A, CP15A, CP21, and CP22 practices

- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - ◇ A base soil rental rate, determined by the soils of the land offered
 - ◇ An incentive payment as follows, except for land enrolled or re-enrolled under infeasible-to-farm provisions
 - 100 percent for land established as a CP8A, CP15A, or CP21 practice
 - 150 percent for land established as a CP22 practice
 - ◇ A maintenance incentive payment for practices CP21 and CP22 practices in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives
- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved practice

In addition, the State of New Jersey will provide eligible participants a cost-share payment of up to 10 percent of the practice installation cost and offer payments to participants for permanent CREP

easements through state-funded programs.

Enrollment Options

CREP is another option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll land in CRP through general or continuous signup; however, the New Jersey CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the New Jersey CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

Haying and Grazing

Contact your local FSA office for more information about authorized haying and grazing activities.

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply.