

Conservation Reserve Program

Continuous Enrollment Period



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Signup.

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers"), to control soil erosion, improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law, H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024, which extended the 2018 Farm Bill. This extension now allows authorized programs, including Continuous CRP, to continue through Sept. 30, 2024.

Benefits

CRP protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion and is designed to safeguard the nation's natural resources. By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams. The vegetative covers also make CRP a major contributor to increased wildlife populations in many parts of the country.

Administration

FSA administers CRP while technical support functions are provided by:

- ♦ USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS);
- ♦ State forestry agencies;
- ♦ Local soil and water conservation districts; and
- ♦ Other non-federal providers of technical assistance.

Continuous Enrollment

To submit an offer for Continuous CRP signup, producers should contact the FSA at their local USDA Service Center by July 31, 2024, in order to have an offer effective by Oct. 1, 2024. To ensure enrollment acreages do not exceed the statutory cap, FSA will accept offers from producers on a first-come, first-served basis and will return offers for approval in batches throughout the year.

Additionally, producers with acres enrolled in Continuous CRP set to expire September 30, 2024, can offer acres for re-enrollment beginning Jan. 12, 2024. A producer can both enroll new acres into Continuous CRP and re-enroll any acres expiring September 30, 2024.

To find your local FSA office visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Who is Eligible?

A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to submitting the offer, unless:

- ♦ The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- ♦ The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law; or
- ♦ The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.





Eligible Land

Land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2012 to 2017 and is physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Certain marginal pastureland that may be devoted to riparian buffers, wildlife habitat buffers, or wetland buffers is also eligible.

Eligible Practices

Land must be eligible and suitable for any of the following conservation practices:

- ◆ Grass Waterway
- ◆ Shallow Water Area for Wildlife
- ◆ Contour Grass Strip
- ◆ Filter Strip
- ◆ Riparian Buffer
- ◆ Denitrifying Bioreactor on Filter Strip and Riparian Buffer
- ◆ Saturated Filter Strip and Riparian Buffer
- ◆ Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
- ◆ Wetland & Buffer SAFE Practices
- ◆ Wetland Restoration on Floodplain and Non- floodplain
- ◆ Prairie Strips
- ◆ Windbreaks, Shelterbelts and Living Snow Fences
- ◆ Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer and Wildlife Habitat Buffers
- ◆ Long Leaf Pine Establishment
- ◆ Duck Nesting Habitat
- ◆ Pollinator Habitat
- ◆ Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands
- ◆ Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) Constructed Wetland
- ◆ FWP Aquaculture Wetland Restoration
- ◆ FWP Flooded Prairie Wetland
- ◆ Farmable Wetlands and Farmable Wetland Buffer
- ◆ Wellhead Protection Area Practices
- ◆ State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)
- ◆ Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI)

Payments

Under CRP continuous signup, FSA provides eligible participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance.

A Signup Incentive Payment of 32.5 percent of the first full year annual rental payment is paid at contract approval on all newly enrolled Continuous CRP contract acreage. A Practice Incentive Payment of up to 50 percent is paid for installing the practice.

Annual Rental Payments

- ◆ In return for establishing long-term, resourceconserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments at 90 percent of the existing rate to eligible CRP continuous participants based on per acre cropland and marginal pasture land rental rates, plus a 10 percent “inflationary” adjustment, determined by FSA.
- ◆ The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate or \$300/acre. Producers may elect to receive a rental rate amount less than the maximum payment rate.
- ◆ **Climate-Smart Practice Incentive:** FSA provides an incentive of 3, 5, or 10 percent for CRP practices that will increase carbon sequestration, reduce GHG emissions, and otherwise are climate smart practices. The incentive amount is based on the estimated benefits of each practice.
- ◆ **Water Quality Incentive:** FSA provides a 20 percent rental rate incentive for CRP water quality practices that will improve water quality by reducing sediment loading, nutrient loading and harmful algae blooms.

Cost-Share Assistance

Cost-share of up to 50 percent of the re- reimbursable cost of installing the practice is provided by FSA. Cost-share assistance is not available for any management activity.

More Information

For more information about FSA and its programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit: farmers.gov/service-locator.