

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)



Overview

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so environmentally sensitive agricultural land is taken out of production and protected through strategically planned conservation practices devoted to conservation benefits and wildlife. CRP participants establish long-term, 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, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

The Conservation Reserve Program was originally authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and reauthorized under the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill). The Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (Pub. L. 119-37), extended CRP authority through Sept. 30, 2026.

CRP is governed by regulations published in 7 CFR, part 1410 and implemented by FSA on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Program 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; non-federal technical service providers.

Benefits

CRP protects more than 20 million 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. CRP is also a major contributor to increased wildlife populations in many parts of the country.

General CRP Enrollment

Producers can offer land for general CRP enrollment annually during announced enrollment periods. Offers for CRP contracts are ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA uses the following EBI factors to assess the environmental benefits for the land offered:

- Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on contract acres;
- Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching;
- On-farm benefits from reduced erosion;
- Benefits that will likely endure beyond the contract period;
- Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion and;
- Cost.

Additional information about general CRP signup is available in the FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program General Signup."

For More Info

Visit FSA's [CRP webpage](#).

To locate your local FSA office, visit: [farmers.gov/service-locator](#).

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details.

Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.



Continuous CRP Enrollment

Under continuous CRP enrollment, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time. Certain eligibility requirements still apply but offers are not subject to competitive bidding.

Additional information about continuous CRP enrollments is available in the FSA fact sheet “[Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment.](#)”

Grasslands CRP Enrollment

Grassland CRP helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

Additional information about Grassland CRP enrollments is available in the FSA fact sheet “[Conservation Reserve Program Grassland.](#)”

Who is Eligible?

A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to submitting the offer for continuous or 12 months before the close of general or grassland signup, unless: months before the close of general or grassland signup, 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

Both continuous CRP and general CRP require cropland to be planted or considered to be planted to an agricultural commodity for four of six crop years from 2012 to 2017 and be 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.

For general signup, land also must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher;
- Be enrolled in a CRP contract that expires Sept. 30, 2026 or;
- Be located in a national or state conservation CRP priority area.

Marginal pastureland may also be eligible for continuous signup. Grasslands CRP has different requirements for eligible land.

Payments

FSA provides CRP participants with annual rental payments, as well as certain incentive payments and cost share assistance.

In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants. Annual rental rates are:

- Based on the relative productivity of the soil within each county and the average cash rent using data provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
- Subject to an 85 percent proration for general signup and a 90 percent proration for continuous signup.
- Based on 75 percent of the NASS pasture rate for grasslands CRP.

The maximum CRP rental rate for each offer is calculated in advance of enrollment. Producers may offer land at that rate or offer a lower rental rate.

Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.