

Colorado Republican River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Colorado are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 60,000 acres of agricultural land within the State of Colorado. The Colorado Republican River CREP is intended to reduce the amount of irrigation water consumptive use, conserve energy, and reduce the amount of agricultural chemicals and sediment entering Colorado waters from agricultural lands.

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 Colorado Republican River CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 14- to 15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland 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 Colorado Republican River CREP include the reduction of:

- ◆ Irrigation water use for agriculture from the Ogallala Aquifer by 6.5 percent from 2004 levels;
- ◆ Irrigation water consumption by up to 69,200 acre-feet per year;
- ◆ Soil erosion by 490,000 tons per year;
- ◆ Annual fertilizer and pesticide application by at least 3,865 tons per year; and
- ◆ Annual electricity use by 2.27 million kilowatt hours.
- ◆ Enroll up to 2,500 eligible cropland acres in CP100, Annual Crop Production, Non-Irrigated.

Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- ◆ CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- ◆ CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP23, Wetland Restoration
- ◆ CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- ◆ CP100, Annual Crop Production, Non-Irrigated

For More Information

Contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.

Colorado State Farm Service Agency
PO Box 25426
Denver Federal Center,
695 Kipling St.
BLDG. 56, RM. 2760
Denver, CO 80225-0426
Phone: (720) 544-2876
Fax: (844) 860-8238

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



Eligible Conservation Practices (continued)

- ◆ Only available in combination with CP100:
 - CP33, Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
 - CP43, Prairie Strips

Enrollment and Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Colorado Republican River CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located within the State of Colorado and at least 51% of the acres per contract must be located within the project area. Only cropland is eligible, and it must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Eligible irrigated cropland must have been irrigated at not less than ½ acre-foot per year for four of the last six years. Eligible non-irrigated cropland must be a center-pivot corner immediately adjacent to enrolled irrigated cropland.

Payments

Under the Colorado Republican River CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- ◆ A one-time sign-up incentive payment (SIP) in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives.
- ◆ A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) in accordance with FSA National CRP Directives. The PIP is equal to up to 40 percent of eligible cost of installing the practice.
- ◆ An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - When only irrigated cropland is enrolled, the county per-acre irrigated rental rates as determined by CCC.
 - When a combination of irrigated and non-irrigated cropland is enrolled, the weighted average of the non-irrigated rental rates for the two predominant soil types and the irrigated county rental rate.
 - An additional incentive will apply to acres enrolled in CP100 and the associated CP33 and/or CP43.

- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of eligible reimbursable costs.
- In addition, the State of Colorado may provide additional annual payments for irrigated cropland acres.

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 Colorado Republican River CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Colorado Republican River 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.