



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Hawaii

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Hawaii are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 15,000 acres of agricultural land in Hawaii, Maui (including Molokai and Lanai), Kauai and Honolulu counties to improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat through the establishment of riparian buffers, hardwood trees and the restoration of wetlands.

BACKGROUND

CREP is a 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. CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014.

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

Through the Hawaii CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for a minimum of 14-year, not to exceed 15-year, contracts. Participants remove marginal pastureland and cropland from agricultural production and convert the land to native trees, grasses and other vegetation, or restore wetlands. This will improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other

pollutants entering waterbodies and improve wildlife habitat.

GOALS

The goals of the Hawaii CREP are to:

- Improve water quality by reducing soil runoff, increasing ground water absorption and reducing stream sedimentation;
- Establish wildlife habitat, including riparian habitat corridors and habitat for threatened, endangered and rare species; and
- Restore and protect wetlands.

ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION PRACTICES

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP3A, Hardwood Tree Planting;
- CP22, Riparian Buffer;
- CP23, Wetland Restoration;
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain;
- CP25, Rare and Declining Habitat;
- CP29, Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer; and
- CP30, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer.

ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Signup for the Hawaii CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in the project area and be either cropland or marginal pastureland. Cropland must meet the cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Marginal pastureland is also eligible for enrollment provided it is suitable for use as an eligible riparian buffer.

PAYMENTS

Under the Hawaii CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by (1) for cropland, the three predominant soils of the land offered; or (2) for marginal pastureland, rate determined by the physical location of the land offered; and
 - A maintenance payment, determined by the practice offered.
- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for practice CP22, CP29 and CP30; or \$150 per acre for practice CP23 and CP23A. Example: 10 acres is enrolled as practice CP22. The SIP is \$1,000 (10 acres times \$100). This payment is made soon after the contract has been signed and approved.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for installing practices CP22, CP23, CP23A, CP29 and CP30. The PIP is equal to 40 percent of the total eligible cost of installing the practice. Example: Producer's total eligible cost of installing the practice is \$2,000. The PIP would be \$800 (\$2,000 times .40).
- A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved conservation practice.

In addition, the State of Hawaii provides an incentive payment of \$17 per acre per year for all acres enrolled.

EXAMPLE

A producer elects to enroll 20 acres of eligible marginal pastureland to be devoted to a riparian buffer (CP22) practice in a 15-year contract. The marginal pastureland rental rate is \$43 per acre. The maintenance rate is \$10 per acre. The State of Hawaii incentive is \$17 per acre. The producer's total annual per acre payment (from CCC and State of Hawaii) is \$70 (\$43 + \$10 + \$17), for a total annual payment of \$1,400 (\$70 x 20 acres). In addition, the producer will receive a one-time SIP of \$2,000. Over the life of the 15-year contract, the producer will receive \$23,000 in annual rental payments and incentive payments. The producer's

cost for establishing the riparian buffer is only 10 percent of the total eligible costs. The producer will also receive cost-share assistance for mid-contract maintenance of the practice.

Note: The preceding is an example only.

HAYING AND GRAZING

Haying and grazing are not allowed during the CRP contract period unless authorized by USDA. Contact your local FSA office for information about authorized haying and grazing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. For more information on CREP, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

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