



### Conservation Reserve Program - Continuous Enrollment

#### OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is used for 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 rental payments and cost-share assistance. Continuous enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

The Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, authorized CRP. The program is also governed by regulations published in 7 CFR, part 1410. The program is implemented by FSA on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program", located at [www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets).

#### 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 AND EFFECTIVE DATE

Under continuous enrollment authority, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices

can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Unlike CRP enrollments under general enrollment authority, offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods.

Producers submitting CRP offers for any continuous enrollment practices, except CREP, will have the option to:

- Request a contract effective date of Oct. 1, 2017; or
- Pending availability of acres, request a contract with an effective date during fiscal year (FY) 2017.

Producers who request a contract effective date deferral of Oct. 1, 2017, will be approved upon the completion of the conservation plan. Producers who request a contract with an effective date during FY 2017 will be accepted on a non-competitive first come, first serve basis in batches as FSA determines that acres are available. If acres do not become available during FY 2017, contracts on the wait-list will be offered an Oct. 1, 2017, effective date before the end of the FY.

If the acres are now under CRP contract and are within one year of the scheduled expiration date, the effective date is Oct. 1 following the expiration date.

CREP enrollment is ongoing and is unaffected. Contracts can be approved at any time.

To offer land for continuous enrollment, producers should contact their [local FSA office](#).

#### ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

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 previous six crop years from 2008 to 2013, 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 is also eligible.

**ELIGIBLE PRACTICES**

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

- Riparian buffers;
- Wildlife habitat buffers;
- Wetland buffers;
- Filter strips;
- Wetland restoration;
- Grass waterways;
- Windbreaks and shelterbelts;
- Living snow fences;
- Contour grass strips;
- Constructed wetlands;
- Restoration of aquaculture wetlands;
- Flooded prairie wetlands;
- Wildlife habitat restoration within approved State Areas for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) projects;
- Land with an erodibility index of 20 or more;
- Pollinator habitat;
- Longleaf pine;
- Bottomland hardwood trees;
- Salt tolerant or salinity reducing vegetation; or
- Shallow water areas for wildlife.

Land within an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-designated public wellhead area also may be eligible for enrollment on a continuous basis.

**PAYMENTS**

FSA provides CRP continuous enrollment participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentives and cost-share assistance:

- **Rental Payments**
  - In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dry-land cash rent or cash rent equivalent as guidelines.

- The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate determined in advance of enrollment. While continuous enrollment acceptance is not determined by a competitive offer process, producers may elect to receive an amount less than the maximum payment rate.
- **Cost-Share Assistance and Incentives**

**Cost-share of 50 percent of the cost of establishing the practice is provided.**

- Some practices may be eligible for an upfront signing incentive payment (SIP) that will be made after the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria are met.
- A practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible installation costs for eligible participants who enroll certain practices. The one-time PIP will be issued after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified and other payment eligibility criteria are met.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only, other details or restrictions may apply. To find more information about FSA conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation) or contact your local FSA office or USDA service center. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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- 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- 3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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