Overview

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general enrollment from Jan. 4, 2021, through Feb. 12, 2021.

CRP is a federally-funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranted, but instead devoted to conservation benefits. 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. Accepted contracts for this CRP enrollment period will become effective Oct. 1, 2021.

CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill). FSA administers CRP, while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. Additional information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet, “Conservation Reserve Program.”

Who is Eligible?

To be eligible for CRP enrollment, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the end of this CRP enrollment period, 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 circumstance of the acquisition presents adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

What Land is Eligible?

To be eligible for the CRP general enrollment period, land must be cropland (including field margins) that is planted, or considered planted, to an agricultural commodity four of the 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. Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may also be eligible.
Additional Cropland Requirements

In addition to the eligible land requirements for the CRP general enrollment period, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher;
- Be expiring CRP acres; or
- Be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area.

CRP Payments

FSA provides those applicants who are selected for CRP general enrollment with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance.

- **Rental Payments**: In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent subject to a statutory 85 percent proration. County office staff working with the producer will calculate the maximum CRP rental rate for each offer prior to enrollment. Producers may offer land below the rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

- **Cost-Share Assistance**: FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance cannot exceed 50 percent of the participant’s costs to establish approved practices.

CRP Continuous Enrollment

In addition to the CRP general enrollment period, producers at any time can participate in CRP continuous enrollment period, in which producers can enroll the most environmentally sensitive land. More information on CRP continuous enrollment is available in the FSA fact sheet, “Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-Up.”

More Information

This fact sheet is for informational purposes; other conditions may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details. For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: farmers.gov/service-locator.