Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
Today’s Agenda

- General CRP: Sign-Up 56
- Conservation Planning
- Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)
- CRP Establishment
- CRP Management
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 devoted to conservation benefits.

CRP participants establish long-term cover on the land.

In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Rental payments are unique to the soils of the land offered.

Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. Accepted contracts for the CRP enrollment period will begin Oct. 1, 2021.
General CRP

General CRP is a competitive bid process, where land is offered nation-wide, and the USDA selects offers based on their Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) ranking.

FSA collects data for each EBI factor based on the relative environmental benefits for the land offered. EBI rankings are unique for each tract of land offered for CRP.

FSA assigns each offer a score based on the offer’s relative environmental factors. Each offer competes with all other offers. USDA determines the acceptability of the offer based on the ranking results.
## General CRP

**Eligible Producers are:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible Producer</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Trust – revocable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General partnership</td>
<td>Trust - irrevocable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint venture</td>
<td>Federal – owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation</td>
<td>State and local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited liability company</td>
<td>Public school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited partnership</td>
<td>Churches, charities and non-profit organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited liability partnership</td>
<td>Indian tribal venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited liability limited partnership</td>
<td>BIA or Indian represented by BIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate</td>
<td>Individual operating a small business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eligible owner must meet 1 of the following requirements:

- Owned the land for 12 months before:
  - the close of signup for general signup

- Acquired the land by will or succession as a result of death.

- A deed must be provided to the local FSA office to determine the date ownership commences by the later of:
  - The date of the deed was recorded
  - The date of possession, if the possession date was **after** the recording date.
General CRP – Person Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria for Operators:

• operated the land for 12 months
  • 12 months prior to the close of the general signup
  • 12 months prior to submitting an offer for continuous signup

and

• provides satisfactory evidence that control of land will continue uninterrupted for entire CRP-1 period with one of the following:
  • statement signed by the owner
  • written lease for the appropriate time period
  • owner’s signature on CRP-1
General CRP - Cropping History

Eligible cropland, must include cropland that includes both of the following:

• Planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during 4 of the 6 crop years from 2012 through 2017

• Expiring CRP may re-enroll in the final year, unless the acreage has a CRP useful life easement that extends beyond the length of the current CRP-1.

• Physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity as determined by the FSA.
Land Eligibility for General Signup

For land to be eligible for ranking during a General Signup, the land must meet one of the following:

1. Erodibility – have a weighted average Erodibility Index (EI) of 8 or greater.
2. Expiring CRP – be currently enrolled CRP in the last year of the contract set to expire on 9/30 of the current year.
3. CPA’s – be located within an approved National or State Conservation Priority Areas (CPA).
CRP General Sign-up 56
January 4, 2021 to Feb. 12, 2021
General CRP
Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)

FSA will rank offers according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI).

The EBI ensures that the most environmentally sensitive acres are selected relative to cost and all offers are considered fairly.

All offers are ranked nationally.
Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)
N1 + N2 + N3 + N4 + N5 + N6 = Offer Points Total

The six EBI factors

N1 – Wildlife Habitat
N2 – Water Quality
N3 – Erosion Reduction
N4 – Enduring Benefits
N5 – Air Quality
N6 – Cost
What EBI factors can YOU influence?

**N1** – Wildlife Benefits
- N1a – Wildlife Habitat Cover
- N1b – Wildlife Enhancement
- N1c – Wildlife Priority Zones

**N4** – Enduring Benefits (based on N1a)

**N5** – Air Quality Benefits
- N4a – Wind Erosion Impacts
- N4b – Wind Erosion Soils List
- N4c – Air Quality Zones
- N4d – Carbon Sequestration (based on N1a)

**N6** – Cost
- N6a – Cost
- N6b – Offer less than maximum payment rate
Things to consider:

Expiring CRP – if the stand doesn’t meet minimum requirements, then you will have to get the stand up to those practice standards through NRCS conservation plan.

More diversity cover

↓

more quality wildlife habitat

↓

more points

↓

better chance of acceptance!
N1 – Wildlife Benefits Factor

- Points are awarded for cover practices and habitat improvements.
- Native mixes of diverse species generally receive the highest point scores.
- Three Subfactors
  - N1a – Wildlife Cover (0 to 50 points)
  - N1b – Wildlife Enhancement (0, 5, 20 Points)
  - N1c – Wildlife Priority Zones (0 to 30 points)

N1 = N1a + N1b + N1c (0 - 100 points)
N1a: Wildlife Habitat Cover (0 – 50 pts)

We will come back to these...
N1b: Wildlife Enhancement (0, 5, 20 pts)

5 Wildlife Food Plots
  o ≤ 10% of a field, NTE
    5 ac./offer

Pollinator Habitat
20
  o CRP offered < 10 ac
    o ≥ 1 ac. of pollinator
      (≥ 0.5 ac plots)
  o CRP offered ≥ 10 ac
    o ≥ 10% offered in pollinator
      (≥ 0.5 ac plots)

SAFE Practice
20
  o ≥ 51% of Offer is in SAFE Area and Offered as SAFE Practice
N1b: Wildlife Enhancement

Option 1 - Wildlife Food Plots (5 pts)

- \( \leq 10\% \) of a field, NTE 5 ac.
- No cost-sharing
- Food plots are best for wildlife when they are 2 acres or more.
N1b: Wildlife Enhancement

Option 2 – Pollinator Habitat (20 pts)

- 10-20+ wildflower species
- Flowering April-October
- Brush piles and edge-feathering encouraged
- Great way to help pollinators and other wildlife species!
N1b: Wildlife Enhancement

Option 3 – State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (20 pts)

Gaining Ground
Quail Habitat
Pheasant Recovery

Grand River Grassland &
Habitat for Neotropical Migratory Birds
- Limited counties!
N1c: Wildlife Priority Zone (0 or 30 points)
N4: Enduring Benefits (0 - 50 points)

Based off the likelihood the cover selected in N1 is to remain in place beyond the CRP contract period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New hardwood tree (CP3A), longleaf pines, or Atlantic White Cedar plantings or CP25 where the plant community is existing or will be established to primarily trees. New hardwood tree CP38C-3A, or CP38C-25 where the plant community is existing or will be established to primarily trees.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing or enhanced stand of hardwood Trees, Longleaf pine, and/or Atlantic White Cedar (CP3A or CP38C-3A)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New pine/softwood tree (CP3 or CP38C-3)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP25, CP38E-25, where the plant community is existing or will be established to a primarily grass and/or shrub complex or CP42 or CP38E-42.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing pine/softwood tree (original contract signed as CP3 or CP38C-3)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other conservation practices not listed (CP1, CP2, CP4D, CP38E-1, CP38-2, CP38E-4D)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
N5: Air Quality Benefits

Evaluates quality improvements caused by wind erosion from cropland. In addition, this factor has points for the value of CRP land that provides carbon sequestration.

There are 4 subfactors:

- N5a – Wind Erosion Impacts (0 to 25 points)
- N5b – Wind Erosion Soils (0 or 5 points)
- N5c – Air Quality Zones (0 or 5 points)
- N5d – Carbon Sequestration (3 to 10 points)
  *only subfactor in landowner’s control*
N5d: Carbon Sequestration Benefits (3 - 10 points)

Based off the cover type selected in N1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP3, CP3A, CP25 (primarily trees), CP38C-3, CP38C-3A, CP38C-25 (primary trees)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP25 (primary grass complex), CP42, CP38E-25 (primarily grasses), CP38E-42</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP4D, CP38E-4D</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP1, CP2, CP38E-1, CP38E-2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP12, CP38E-12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This subfactor evaluates the benefits of sequestering greenhouse gases by practice over the expected life of the practice.
N6: Cost

*Designed to optimize the environmental benefits per dollar for CRP rental payments*

**Two subfactors:**
- N6a – Cost (point value determined after end of enrollment)
- N6b – Offer less than maximum payment soil rental rate (0-25 points)

**Example:**
Farmer Bob will receive $100/ac. for his CRP based on his soils. He decided to offer 15% less than that estimate soil rental rate ($85/ac.) in order to get an additional 25 points on his General CRP offer.
Conservation Practices (CP)

Table 1 – Cover Practices (CP) for the N1a Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CP1 Permanent introduced grasses and legumes</th>
<th>Point Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing monoculture (1 species) stand of an introduced grass</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing stand of 2 to 3 species or planting new stand of 2 to 3 species of an introduced grass species</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing stand or planting mixture (minimum of 4 species) of at least 3 introduced grasses and at least 1 forb or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CP2 Permanent native grasses and legumes</th>
<th>Point Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing monoculture (1 species) stand of a native grass</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing stand (minimum 2 to 3 species) or planting new mixed stand (minimum of 3 species) of at least 2 native grass species and at least 1 forb or legume species beneficial to wildlife</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing stand or planting mixed stand (minimum of 5 species) of at least 3 native grasses and at least 1 shrub, forb, or legume species best suited for wildlife in the area</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CP3 Tree planting (general 2)</th>
<th>Point Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Pines (Softwoods) - Solid stand of pines/softwoods (existing according to State-developed standards or planted at more than 550 trees per acre)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Conifers (Softwoods) - Solid stand of conifers/softwoods (existing according to State-developed standards or planted at more than 850 trees per acre)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Pines (Softwoods) - Solid stand of pines/softwoods (existing according to State-developed standards or planted at more than 650 trees per acre)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Pines (Softwoods) - Pines/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 550 to 550 per acre depending upon the site index (State-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Conifers (Softwoods) - Conifers/softwoods existing or planted at a rate of 750 to 850 trees per acre depending upon the site index (State-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Pines (Softwoods) - Western Pines (softwoods) - Pines/softwoods existing planted at a rate of 550 to 650 per acre depending upon the site index (State-developed standards) with 10 to 20 percent openings managed to a CP4D wildlife cover</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opening for Southern and Western Pines are not to be less than a minimum of 2 acres or a minimum of 5 acres in size for fields of 20 acres and larger.

For smaller fields will be based upon percentage. Opening in Northern conifers will be one-half to 2 acres in size. Opening may include buffers on the interior of the field. Field edges (borders) may be used if they are irregular in shape and average 30 feet in width.

Natural regeneration of native herbaceous or shrubby vegetation with required maintenance may be permitted within open areas if it is consistent with NRCS technical standards and conserved with by State FWS or U.S. FWS Officials.

Open areas of native grasses and/or shrub planting best suited for wildlife in the area shall be considered CP3 for EBI scoring and contract purposes.
### CP1 - Introduced Grasses & Legumes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Score (N1a)</th>
<th>Cover Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>Existing</strong>: monoculture (1 species) of an introduced grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Existing</strong>: ≥ 2 - 3 introduced grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>New</strong>: ≥ 2 - 3 introduced grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td><strong>Existing/New</strong>: 4 species minimum - ≥ 3 introduced grasses, 1 forb/legume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CP2 - Native Grasses & Legumes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Score (N1a)</th>
<th>Cover Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>Existing</strong>: monoculture (1 species) of a native grass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **20**            | **Existing**: 2 native species minimum  
                  | **New**: 3 species minimum -  
                  | ≥ 2 native grasses + 1 legume/forb |
| **50**            | **Existing/New**: 5 species minimum -  
                  | ≥ 3 native grasses, at least 1 forb,  
                  | legume, or shrub species for wildlife |
## CP3A - Hardwood Tree Planting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Score (N1a)</th>
<th>Cover Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Existing or planning solid stand of nonmast-producing hardwood species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Existing or planning solid stand of a single hard mast-producing species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Existing or planning Mixed stand (less than 3) of hardwood species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Existing or planning Mixed stand (≥ 3 species) of hardwood species</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CP4D - Permanent Wildlife Habitat

**Point Score (N1a) **

**40**

**Existing/New:** minimum of 4 species - grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for wildlife in the area.

**50**

**Existing/New:** minimum of 5 **native** species - grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for wildlife in the area.

Offer must be ≥ 5 acres.

A conservation planner will work with you to develop a wildlife plan for this option!
CP25 - Rare & Declining Habitat Restoration

Point Score (N1a)  Cover Criteria

50

Existing/New: minimum of 5 *native* grasses and at least 10 *native* forbs.

- Shrub plantings are authorized NTE 5% of contract acres.
- Trees are not approved cover on CP25 in Iowa.
CP38E – State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Options

Gaining Ground

Pheasant Recovery

Grand River Grassland = Ringgold County Only

Quail Habitat

Habitat for Neotropical Migratory Birds = 4 Counties in NE IA Only
### CP38E (CP2, CP4D, or CP25) - Gaining Ground

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP2</strong> - Existing/New</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>minimum of 5 species - &gt; 3 native grasses and at least 1 shrub, forb, or legume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP4D</strong> - Existing/New</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>minimum of 5 native species - grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes planted in mixes, blocks, or strips best suited for wildlife in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP25</strong> - Existing/New</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>minimum of 5 native grasses and at least 10 native forbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Offer Requirements:** Offer must be > 10 ac.
**Point Score (N1a)  Cover Criteria**

**Three cover types**

- Winter Cover (25% of offer, NTE 20 ac.)
- Food Plot (10% of offer, NTE 5 ac.)
- Nesting Cover (Remaining acres of offer)

**Offer Requirements:** Offer must be > 20 ac. offer, NTE 160 ac.
CP38E(4D) - Early Successional Quail Habitat

Point Score (N1a)  Cover Criteria

50

Two cover types required
- Early Successional Habitat (25% of offer acres)
- Nesting Cover – mixture of short native grasses and forbs (75% of offer acres)

Optional: Food plots and winter cover

Offer Requirements: Offer must be ≥ 5 ac.
CP38E - Grand River Grasslands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score (N1a)</th>
<th>Cover Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td><strong>Cover Criteria</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CP2 - Existing/New</strong>: minimum of 5 species - &gt; 3 short native grasses and at least 1 shrub, forb, or legume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td><strong>CP25 - Existing/New</strong>: minimum of 5 short native grasses and at least 10 native forbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only eligible in a portion of Ringgold County.
### CP38E - Habitat for Early Successional and Neotropical Migratory Forest Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CP3A - Existing/New</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>minimum of 3 or more species of hardwood trees suited for wildlife in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP4D - Existing/New</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>minimum of 5 species of either grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs, or legumes determined in the wildlife plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Counties in NE Iowa: Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, and Winneshiek Counties

Offer Requirements: Offer must be $\geq 5$ ac.
CP42 - Pollinator Habitat

Point Score | Cover Criteria
---|---
50 | **Existing/New**: minimum of 9 species of pollinator-friendly flower plantings of which at least 3 species shall have their primary onset of blooming during each period: April - June 15, June 15 - July, and August - October.

Offer Requirements: Offer must a minimum of 0.5 acres.
Many options exist

Check with your local USDA office to learn more about your options!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>CP1</th>
<th>CP2</th>
<th>CP38E-4D</th>
<th>CP3A</th>
<th>CP25</th>
<th>CP42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1a</td>
<td>0,10,40</td>
<td>0,20,50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10,20,30,50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1b</td>
<td>0,5,20</td>
<td>0,5,20</td>
<td>0,5,20</td>
<td>0,5,20</td>
<td>0,5,20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40,50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>3-63</td>
<td>3-73</td>
<td>54-74</td>
<td>60-130</td>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving the EBI

Example

Landowner with expiring CRP (CP1) wants to re-enroll 100 acres of primarily introduced grass (smooth brome) cover.
Improving the EBI

Example

Scenario #1:
The landowner can offer the existing cover as is plus offer to add a food plot and hope that their EBI ranking is above the national cutoff score.

\[ 0 + 5 + 0 + 3 = 8 \text{ points} \]
Factors: \( N1a + N1b + N4 + N5d \)

Scenario #2:
The landowner can offer a cover of CP25.

\[ 50 + 0 + 25 + 5 = 80 \text{ points} \]
Factors: \( N1a + N1b + N4 + N5d \)

OR

Offer CP25 and enhance 10% of the acres as pollinator habitat to gain an additional 20 points.

\[ 50 + 20 + 25 + 5 = 100 \text{ points} \]
Factors: \( N1a + N1b + N4 + N5d \)
Establishment into Corn/Bean Stubble

- Site preparation: firm seedbed for planting
- Plant native cover (broadcast or no-till drill)
- Mowing in Years 1 & 2
Conversions from Introduced Species to Native Species

Converting an introduced stand

✓ Remove cover (i.e. mow/hay, burn)
✓ Chemical burndown (≥2 times, fall spray is critical!)
✓ Plant native cover
Required Management Activities

CRP management is good farm management

• All CRP participants perform management activities as part of their approved conservation plan.

• These management activities are designed to maximize wildlife benefits while ensuring soil, water, and other resources are protected throughout the life of the contract.

• Remember, no cost share for Required Management (formerly known as MCM) for this CRP sign up.
Questions?

United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Iowa Department of Natural Resources