

# Farmable Wetlands Program

## Overview

The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) is a voluntary program to restore up to one million acres of farmable wetlands and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation. Eligible producers in all states can enroll eligible land in the FWP through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Producers plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat on land enrolled in CRP. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. FWP is designed to prevent degradation of wetland areas, increase sediment trapping efficiencies, improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and provide habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

## Eligible Land

To be eligible, land must meet one of the following:

- Includes farmed and prior converted wetlands that have been impacted by farming activities. Must be cropland planted to an agricultural commodity three of the 10 most recent crop years and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity;
- Include a constructed wetland developed to receive flow for a row-crop agriculture drainage system for the purpose of providing nitrogen removal and other wetland functions;
- Devoted to commercial pond-raised aquaculture in any year during 2002-2007; and
- Cropland that, after Jan. 1, 1990, and before Dec. 31, 2002, was cropped during at least three of 10 crop years, and was subject to the natural overflow of a prairie wetland.

Acreage must also meet the following FWP eligibility requirements:

- Enrolled land cannot exceed:
  - 40 acres for wetlands or constructed wetlands
  - 20 acres for intermittently flooded prairie wetlands
  - 40 acres per tract for eligible wetlands and buffers; and
- Participants must agree to restore the hydrology of the wetlands to establish vegetative cover, which may include emerging vegetation in water, bottomland hardwoods, cypress and other appropriate tree species; and to the general prohibition of using the enrolled land for commercial purposes.

## Conservation Practices

The conservation practices authorized under FWP are:  
CP27 - Farmable Wetlands Wetland;

CP28 - Farmable Wetlands Buffer;  
CP39 - Farmable Wetlands Constructed Wetland  
CP40 - Farmable Wetlands Aquaculture Wetland Restoration  
CP41 - Farmable Wetlands Flooded Prairie Wetland

### **Contract Duration and Effective Date**

FWP contracts are in effect for 10 to 15 years, in exchange for annual rental payments, incentive payments, and cost-share for installing necessary practices. The effective date of the contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval.

### **Payments**

Eligible producers may receive the following types of payments:

- Annual rental payments for a 10- to 15-year period. The rental rate is based on the weighted average dryland cash rent.
- For aquaculture, if there is no soil survey data, annual rental payments are based on the country average CRP rental rate.
- Upfront CRP signing incentive payment of \$100 per acre. (This one-time payment is made after the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria are met.)
- Practice incentive payment equal to 40 percent of the eligible costs of installing the practice. This one-time payment is made after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified, and other payment eligibility criteria are met.
- Incentive amount equal to 20 percent of the weighted average dryland cash rent.
- Up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing permanent cover.

### **Cooperating Agencies**

The FWP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; Forest Service; State Foresters; other state agencies; and local soil and water conservation districts.

### **More Information**

For more information on FWP, other conservation programs, and to sign up, please visit your local FSA county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.