

For: State and County Offices

CRP Practices Available for Organic Farming

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

In 2016, USDA announced its intent to assist organic farmers with the cost of establishing up to 20,000 acres of new conservation buffers and other practices through CRP on and near farms that produce organic crops. FSA continues to evaluate and examine new ways to identify, approach, and engage potential program participants. Highlighting and marketing continuous CRP to organic producers is 1 opportunity.

Financial assistance available from CRP can help tailor existing conservation practices to the needs of organic farmers, and farmers transitioning to organic agriculture, helping to improve soil and water quality while also providing more wildlife habitat. CRP is 1 component of the wide variety of services available to all segments of agriculture at local FSA offices.

By creating conservation buffers, CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and develop wildlife habitat. Organic producers interested in establishing buffers of native or introduced species, shrubs, and trees, or supporting pollinating species, can offer eligible land for enrollment in this initiative at any time.

Note: The initiative acreage limitation has been removed.

B Purpose

This notice reminds State and County Offices of:

- existing CRP provisions and available practices compatible with certified organic production operations and those transitioning to organic production
- automation instructions for tracking organic buffers in the Conservation Online System (COLS)
- Organic Buffer Initiative and CLEAR Outreach resources

Disposal Date	Distribution
December 1, 2022	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice CRP-965

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose (Continued)

- updating Practice CP5A, Field Windbreak Establishment, to match the purposes to the Conservation Practice Field Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (380) in Exhibit 1.

2 Organic Buffer Availability

A Available Practices

Of the available CRP practices, a few of the most likely to be considered beneficial by organic producers and their operations may include:

- CP5A, Field Windbreak Establishment
- CP16A, Shelterbelt Establishment
- CP21, Filter Strips
- CP21B, Denitrifying Bioreactor on Filter Strips
- CP21S, Saturated Filter Strips
- CP33, Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
- CP42, Pollinator Habitat
- CP43, Prairie Strips.

B CRP Policy

There is no change to CRP policy related to this initiative; normal producer and land eligibility rules apply.

2-CRP, Exhibit 11:

- provides the availability of CRP practices to organic operations in the respective practice policy statements
- will be updated for added practices in a future amendment.

3 Automation

A COLS

There is no change to COLS. COLS was enhanced previously to add the Non Delineated Sub Fields (NDSF) screens, which allow a user to select when a portion of a field or an entire field being offered is associated with an organic farming operation.

See 4-CRP, paragraph 236 for more information on NDSF screens and applicable warning messages.

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3 Automation (Continued)

A COLS (Continued)

The following NDSF screen will display when an offer has an eligible practice associated to the offer.

The screenshot shows the NDSF COLS interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, About COLS, Help, Contact Us, Exit CRP, and Logout of eAuth. Below this, user information is displayed: FSA State: Wisconsin (55), FSA County: Dodge (027), and Signup: SU57 CREP Wisconsin. The scenario details are: Scenario Description: CP21, Physical Location: Wisconsin/Dodge. A summary table shows: Tract Number: [redacted], Expiring CRP Acres: 3.50, Expiring GRP Acres: 0.00, Cropland Acres: 3.50, MPL Acres: 0.00, and Non Cropland Acres: 0.00. The main section is titled "Non Delineated Sub Fields" and contains a "Practice" dropdown menu set to "--Select--", with "Add" and "Reset" buttons. Below this is a table with columns: Field Number, Practice Code, Practice Acres, Category, and Category Acres.

Selecting the applicable practice and field from the drop-down menu will generate additional selection criteria. The County Office will then select the correct category that applies to the practice/field being offered.

This screenshot shows the same NDSF COLS interface as above, but with the "Practice" dropdown menu open. The dropdown menu is currently displaying "0001 /CP21(2.30)". Below the dropdown, a list of practice options is visible: Denitrification - Bioreactor, Organic - Adjacent to Organic Farm, Organic - Certified Farm, and Organic - Transitioning to Organic Production. The "Category" and "Category Acres" fields are also visible below the dropdown.

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3 Automation (Continued)

A COLS (Continued)

Next, enter the number of acres that are associated to the category selected. In this example, the entire farm is certified organic and all 2.3 acres of field 1 are entered. CLICK “Add” to save the NDSF to the offer.

Scenario Description <input type="text" value="CP21"/>		Physical Location Wisconsin/Dodge	
Tract Number <input type="text"/>	Expiring CRP Acres 3.50	Expiring GRP Acres 0.00	
Cropland Acres 3.50	MPL Acres 0.00	Non Cropland Acres 0.00	

Non Delineated Sub Fields

Practice

Category

Category Acres

◀ ▶

Field Number	Practice Code	Practice Acres	Category	Category Acres
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Once saved, additional fields and categories can be added until all practices/fields are associated. The County Office may also edit or delete an NDSF if necessary.

Scenario Description <input type="text" value="CP21"/>		Physical Location Wisconsin/Dodge	
Tract Number <input type="text"/>	Expiring CRP Acres 3.50	Expiring GRP Acres 0.00	
Cropland Acres 3.50	MPL Acres 0.00	Non Cropland Acres 0.00	

Non Delineated Sub Fields

Practice

Category

Category Acres

◀ ▶

Field Number	Practice Code	Practice Acres	Category	Category Acres
0001	CP21	2.30	Organic - Certified Farm	2.30 Edit Delete
Total		2.30		2.30

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3 Automation (Continued)

A COLS (Continued)

NDSF can be found on the Enrollment Worksheet in COLS. NDSF will display before “Predominant Soils/ITF Sub-Portion Soils”.

Re-Enrolling					
Field Number	Practice Code	Admin St/Cty Expiring Contract Number	Expiring Practice Code	Expiring Acres	Expiring Contract Signup Name
0001	CP21		CP21	2.30	36 CREP Wisconsin
0007	CP21		CP21	1.20	36 CREP Wisconsin

Non Delineated Sub Fields		
Practice Code	Category	Category Acres
CP21	Organic - Certified Farm	2.30
Total Category Acres:		2.30

Predominant Soils/ ITF Sub-Portion Soils

4 Outreach

A Outreach Materials

Program outreach materials are available on the FSA Outreach Intranet at <https://inside.fsa.usda.gov/operations/office-of-outreach/program-toolkits/index>. The following documents are included in the toolkit for CRP Outreach:

- Outreach Meeting PowerPoint
- Fact Sheet
- State Release Template
- GovDelivery Toolkit
- Talking Points.

B Outreach Actions

SED’s, STC’s, State Outreach Coordinators, DD’s, and COC’s will ensure that County Offices:

- notify producers of CRP provisions and signup deadlines using all available resources within the available budget
- enter all nonmedia-related CRP outreach activities into the Outreach Tracking and Information System (OTIS) at <https://ems.fpac.usda.gov/OTIS/Outreach/home.aspx>.

Note: The FSA program is CRP.

Note: County Offices must enter actual results in OTIS within 2 workdays after the conclusion of the activity.

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5 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices will:

- follow the provisions of this notice
- ensure that County Offices follow the provisions of this notice
- provide a copy of this notice to NRCS
- contact Patrick Lewis, Program Specialist, Conservation Division, with questions about this notice.

B County Office Action

County Offices will:

- follow the provisions of this notice
- include the provisions of this notice in County Office Outreach efforts
- contact their respective State Office specialist responsible for CRP with questions about this notice.

CP5A Field Windbreak Establishment**A Purpose**

This practice is to establish windbreaks to meet 1 or more of the following purposes:

- reduce cropland erosion below soil loss tolerance
- enhance the wildlife habitat on the designated area
- intercept airborne particulate matter, chemicals, and odors
- capture and store carbon
- provide buffering associated with organic farming operations.

B Program Policy

Apply this practice to eligible cropland that is suitably located and adapted to the development or restoration of a field windbreak that will reduce erosion below soil loss tolerance and enhance wildlife habitat on the contract acres.

Eligible cropland must meet the requirements in 2-CRP, subparagraph 181 A.

C Size Requirement

Field windbreaks must be installed to the minimum design according to conservation practice standard Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (380) to address 1 or more of the purposes listed in subparagraph A. Field windbreaks are intended to be adjacent to active agricultural production and designed to a maximum size that is not greater than the associated production area.

D Eligibility

To be eligible for C/S, this cover practice must:

- improve environmental benefits to less than the soil loss tolerance
- prevent degradation of environmental benefits from recurring after establishment
- be maintained for the CRP-1 period
- be included in the approved conservation plan.

CP5A Field Windbreak Establishment (Continued)

E C/S Policy

The following shows C/S policies for this practice.

IF the component is...	THEN C/S is...
trees or shrubs planted as field windbreaks that will improve the cropland wind erosion and environmental benefits on a farm or ranch temporary cover and the justification is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • required in the practice specifications • needed until required seed or plant stock is available • needed because the normal planting period for the species has passed • that a soil condition, such as chemical residue, will not allow establishment of cover immediately 	authorized using technical practice codes 314, 315, 327, 340, 380, 441, 484, 550, 612, and 645.
plastic mulch or supplemental drip irrigation, for arid areas	
tree shelters, netting, plastic tubes, or other animal control damage devices, and the purpose is approved by STC for the area and substantiated as needed by designated technician and COC to prevent damage from wildlife browsing Note: STC must designate areas where using these measures is warranted and cost-effective to protect seedlings. See 2-CRP, paragraphs 31 and 490.	authorized not to exceed an average cost, as determined by STC.
planting orchard trees	not authorized.
ornamental planting	
Christmas tree production	
fences	

CP5A Field Windbreak Establishment (Continued)**F Practice Requirements**

The following are requirements for this practice.

- When supplemental drip irrigation or plastic mulch is applied and the average annual precipitation for the area is 25 inches or less.
- Planting **must** be protected from destructive fire and must not be harvested or grazed by domestic livestock for the life of CRP-1.

Exception: Emergency and non-emergency haying/grazing if authorized and included in the conservation plan. See 2-CRP, Part 19.

- Chemicals used in performing CP5A **must** be:
 - Federally, State, and locally registered
 - applied strictly according to authorized registered uses, directions on the label, and other Federal or State policies and requirements.
- A management activity is required for each practice, if needed.

G Planting Timespan

Planting or sowing of the approved cover must be completed within 12 months of the effective date of CRP-1. See 2-CRP, paragraph 426 for exceptions.

CP5A Field Windbreak Establishment (Continued)**H Environmental Concerns**

Consideration of wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, and other environmental concerns, including impacts to organic farming operations, are to be evaluated in the planning and establishment of the protective measure.

I Practice Maintenance

The practice must be maintained for the CRP-1 period. C/S must be refunded if:

- producer destroys the cover during the CRP-1 period
- cover fails to improve environmental benefits during the practice lifespan unless the failure is caused by circumstances beyond the producer's control.

J Management Activity

A management activity is required for each practice, if needed. See 2-CRP, paragraph 428.

C/S is not authorized for management activities.

K Program Development

Follow this subparagraph to develop State/county program.

- Consider wildlife and environmental protection when designing this practice.
- State/county practice must identify the eligible species and provide any requirements, such as spacing, minimum planting per acre, site preparation, etc., that are conditions for C/S. Technical specifications may be incorporated by reference.

L Technical Responsibility

Technical responsibility for this practice is assigned to NRCS or TSP.