



## news

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### ***Agricultural producers and landowners have chosen conservation on more than 23 million acres of private land nationwide***

**WASHINGTON, Oct. 16, 2023** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued more than \$1.77 billion this year to agricultural producers and landowners through its Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a critical piece of the Department's efforts to support climate-smart agriculture and forestry on working lands. Right now, CRP's more than 667,000 participants received payments from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) for their voluntary conservation efforts on more than 23 million acres of private land. Since 2021, CRP has grown by 21 percent in terms of acres enrolled, testament to the Biden-Harris administration's program improvement efforts.

"Through the addition of tools to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and better quantify these efforts, while also bringing into the fold more Tribes and underserved producers, we've made the Conservation Reserve Program better for our nation's natural resources and for our agricultural producers and landowners," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "These producers and landowners voluntarily place their land under contract and, in the spirit of stewardship, agree to establish and maintain prescribed conservation practices for the life of contract. We're grateful to all CRP participants who are making a tremendous difference by proactively addressing climate change and conserving natural resources now and for future generations."

Top five states for CRP participant payments:

- Iowa, \$402,508,900
- Illinois, \$172,723,800
- Minnesota, \$150,773,400
- South Dakota, \$129,545,200
- Missouri, \$99,849,600

## Improvements to CRP

Since 2021, FSA has made improvements to the program:

- **Introducing a new climate-smart practice incentive** for CRP general and continuous signups designed to reward participants who implement conservation practices that increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Enabling additional soil rental rate adjustments** or rate flexibilities, including a possible increase in rates where appropriate.
- **Increasing payments for practice incentives** from 20 percent to 50 percent. This incentive, in addition to cost share payments, for continuous CRP practices is based on establishment cost.
- **Increasing payments for water quality practices rates** from 10 percent to 20 percent for certain water quality benefiting practices available through the CRP continuous signup, such as grassed waterways, riparian buffers and filter strips.
- **Establishing a Grassland CRP minimum rental rate** benefitting more than 1,000 counties with rates currently below the \$13 minimum.

Additionally, FSA made significant improvements to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) that reduce barriers by making the program more accessible to a broader cross-section of agricultural producers and new conservation partners. These program improvements include the flexibility for partners to provide matching funds in the form of cash, in-kind contributions, or technical assistance and the ability for FSA to invest in additional, full-time staff devoted to working directly with our CREP partners and program specialists in FSA's state offices.

Since 2021, FSA has also entered into the first-ever Tribal Nations CREP agreements in partnership with the Cheyenne River, Rosebud and Oglala Sioux Tribes. In 2022, USDA also entered into the Big Sioux River Watershed CREP agreement with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks to assist farmers, ranchers and agricultural landowners to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance wildlife habitat, and create public hunting and fishing access. These CREP agreements reflect priorities and goals of USDA to broaden the scope and reach of its voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs to engage underserved producers.

FSA's conservation programs had a strong showing in 2023. FSA partnered with producers and landowners to enroll 3.9 million CRP this year -including 927,000 enrolled acres through General CRP, 2.3 million acres enrolled in Grassland CRP and 694,000 acres enrolled in Continuous CRP. These results underscore the continued importance of CRP as a tool to help producers invest in the long-term health, sustainability, and profitability of their land and natural resources.

## More Information

CRP is a voluntary program contract with agricultural producers through which environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees 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.

To learn more about CRP and other FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America.

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