

Conservation Reserve Program

Agency/Organization: Farm Service Agency

Program: Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CRP provides assistance to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation of streams and lakes, improve water quality, establish wildlife habitat, and enhance forests and wetlands resources. It encourages conversion of highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to perennial vegetative cover and provides annual rental payments for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is available for establishment of vegetative cover, fencing, livestock crossings, etc. Additional state funding and extended contracts are available through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Assistance Type: Financial, Technical

Financial Assistance: There are three payment types:

Practice Costs: The cost of installing the practice (riparian buffer, vegetative cover) will be covered between 90% and 100% depending on the combination of programs used.

Upfront Practices: The Federal Payment occurs upfront is a USDA Commodity Credit Corporation payment of \$10 /acre/year for 10 years. The Federal CRP contract that must be signed has a maximum length of 15 years. Additional contract duration and payments can be obtained through a 15 year extension of the contract under CREP, which provides \$10/acre more than the 15 year contract in the upfront incentive payment.

Annual Rental Payments: Annual rental payments are paid each year by the USDA after October 1. The annual payment includes a rental rate for the land taken out of production as well as a maintenance payment for upkeep of the practices. Rental rates are based on the soil type at the county level as a reflection of the land productivity. The maintenance rate depends on the practice installed.

ELIGIBILITY

Landscape Type: Agriculture

Resource Type: Water quality, Soil Conservation, Wildlife habitat

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Criteria: Landowners must have owned or operated their land for 12 months prior to enrollment and must have a water quality concern that can be ameliorated through changes in agricultural activities. The main resource concern is a prominent stream or river adjoining your fields with issues such as concentrated nutrient and pollutant runoff, and significant sediment losses due to overland flow. CRP does not cover small channels on cropland caused by rains and erosion, wetlands, man-made ponds, and entire fields. Pasture, hay land, or cropland adjacent to streams that lack adequate buffers to protect water quality are eligible. To ensure that the acreage under enrollment is not substantially reduced by streambank erosion over a 15 or 30 year contract, streambanks must be stable to be considered eligible unless the landowner can offer a considerably wider buffer to capture the gains and losses caused by erosion.