



Farm Service Agency

Conservation Reserve Program – Continuous Enrollment Period

FACT SHEET
December 2019

Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Signup.

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers"), to control soil erosion, improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

The Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, authorized CRP. The program is also governed by regulations published in 7 CFR, part 1410. The program is implemented by FSA on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. To offer land for continuous enrollment, producers should contact their local FSA office.

Benefits

CRP protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion and is designed to safeguard the nation's natural resources. By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams. The vegetative covers also make CRP a major contributor to increased wildlife populations in many parts of the country.



Administration

FSA administers CRP while technical support functions are provided by:

- USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS);
- State forestry agencies;
- Local soil and water conservation districts; and
- Other non-federal providers of technical assistance

Continuous Enrollment

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Unlike CRP enrollments under general CRP signups or CRP Grasslands, offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods.

If the offered acres are currently enrolled in CRP under a CRP contract that expires September 30, then the effective start date of the new CRP contract must be the following October 1.

If the offered acres are not currently enrolled in CRP, then the producer may choose to defer the effective start date of the new CRP contract for up to six months after the offer is approved.



CRP – CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT PERIOD - DECEMBER 2019

Who is Eligible?

A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to submitting the offer, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law; or
- The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land

Land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2012 to 2017 and is physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Certain marginal pastureland that may be devoted to riparian buffers, wildlife habitat buffers, or wetland buffers is also eligible.

Eligible Practices

Land must be eligible and suitable for any of the following conservation practices:

- Grass Waterway
- Shallow Water Area for Wildlife
- Contour Grass Strip
- Filter Strip
- Riparian Buffer
- Denitrifying Bioreactor on Filter Strip and Riparian Buffer
- Saturated Filter Strip and Riparian Buffer
- Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
- Wetland & Buffer SAFE Practices
- Wetland Restoration on Floodplain and Non-floodplain
- Prairie Strips
- Windbreaks, Shelterbelts and Living Snow Fences
- Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer and Wildlife Habitat Buffers
- Long Leaf Pine Establishment
- Duck Nesting Habitat

- Pollinator Habitat
- Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands
- Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) Constructed Wetland
- FWP Aquaculture Wetland Restoration
- FWP Flooded Prairie Wetland
- Farmable Wetlands and Farmable Wetland Buffer
- Wellhead Protection Area Practices

Payments

Under CRP continuous signup, FSA provides eligible participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance.

A Signup Incentive Payment of 32.5 percent of the first full year annual rental payment is paid at contract approval on all newly enrolled Continuous CRP contract acreage. A Practice Incentive Payment of 5 percent is paid for installing the practice.

Annual Rental Payments

- In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments at 90 percent of the existing rate to eligible CRP continuous participants based on per acre cropland and marginal pasture land rental rates determined by FSA.
- The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate or \$300/acre. Producers may elect to receive a rental rate amount less than the maximum payment rate.

Cost-Share Assistance

Cost-share of up to 50 percent of the reimbursable cost of installing the practice is provided by FSA. Cost-share assistance is not available for any management activity.

More Information

For more information about FSA and its programs, visit fsa.usda.gov or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.