

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) offers incentives to install many different conservation practices on the land.

What is the CRP?

The Conservation Reserve program (CRP) was authorized and funded by the 1985 farm bill. The CRP has removed millions of acres of highly erodible farmland nationally from row crop production, thereby reducing soil erosion, increasing wildlife habitat, and improving the quality of ground and surface waters. The CRP is a voluntary program that offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish a long-term cover on eligible land. The landowner will receive annual rental payments and a payment up to 50 percent of the cost for establishing conservation practices.

Administered by United States Department of Agriculture's Farm Services Agency (FSA), the CRP pays landowners to remove environmentally sensitive land from production and establish conservation practices. Accepted conservation practices include wetlands, grasslands and forests. The purpose of the CRP is to limit soil erosion, provide wildlife habitat, and improve water quality.

How does the CRP work?

The CRP is designed to give the landowner financial assistance in reducing soil erosion, protecting and improving wildlife habitat, air and water quality, and establishing waterways on his or her land. Practices that are approved to assist a landowner improve his/her land include establishing permanent vegetation, wildlife habitat, tree and shrub

Key Points

- What is the CRP?
- How does the CRP work?
- How do I sign up?
- Where do I go for more information?

plantings, filter strips, riparian buffers, and grass waterways.

This program is designed to protect millions of acres of environmentally sensitive land. By reducing water runoff, it also protects ground and surface waters.

How do I sign up?

CRP eligibility depends upon several criteria. The land must have a cropping history (has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity two of the past five crop years).

During the general sign-up periods, producers submit competitive bids to enroll land in CRP at their local FSA office.

There is also a continuous

signup of the CRP, where payments are offered for long-term conservation easements on land—from 10 to 15 years. Land eligible for the continuous signup program may receive a bonus payment.

Once enrolled in CRP, producers are not allowed to plant row crops (corn, soybeans, etc.), graze the land, or otherwise disturb it without first getting special permission from their local Soil and Water Conservation District office and FSA office.

After the contract expires, the landowner has no restrictions on the use of the land. Or, it may be possible to extend the contract.

Where do I go for more information?

Contact your local FSA office or Soil and Water Conservation District office, for more information on the Conservation Reserve Program. Your Iowa State University county Extension office can also provide you with educational material on the CRP. Ask to see the CRP Resource Manual.

Best Management Practices, or BMPs, utilize the most effective and practical means available to reduce or prevent water pollution from farm operations. BMPs are selected based on assessment, analysis of the impact of alternative practices and their economic considerations. They are implemented using current available technologies, management skills and available resources. BMP information sheets available from ISU Extension include:

- NMEP 1, *Soil Testing*
- NMEP 2, *Phosphorus Application*
- NMEP 3, *Manure Resources*
- NMEP 4, *Residue Management*
- NMEP 5, *Crop Rotation*
- NMEP 6, *Crop Yields*
- NMEP 7, *Nitrogen Application*
- NMEP 8, *Nutrient Management Plan*
- NMEP 9, *Equipment Calibration*
- NMEP 10, *Conservation Reserve Program*
- NMEP 11, *Conservation Practices*


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