

Enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program

What it means to you and your land

What is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)?



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- USDA program authorized in 1985
- Administered Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Protects highly erodible land and environmentally sensitive land from erosion
- Program participants plant long-term, resource-conserving covers

What is CRP?

- In return, FSA provides annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Iowa's average rental rate is \$177
- 23 million acres currently enrolled nationally
 - 3.3 million set to expire in September
- 1.5 million acres enrolled in Iowa
 - 99,639 acres set to expire September 30, 2016
- Next General CRP signup is
 - **December 1, 2015 thru February 26, 2016**
 - **CRP contracts expiring in Sept 2016 are eligible to re-enroll with this signup.**

Why CRP?

General Benefits

- Provides steady Income
- Improves wildlife habitat
- Reduces soil erosion
- Protects water quality
- Increases soil health
- Improves air quality
- Attracts wildlife species

Why CRP?

Agricultural Benefits

- Improve average yields
 - When taking less productive land out
- Address problem areas within fields
 - You are not required to enroll entire fields.
- Reduce conservation compliance risks

Am I eligible for CRP?

- **New land**

- Must have owned the land for 1 year or more
 - ❖ Haven't owned the land for one year? Ask FSA if a waiver is an option for you.
- Must have been planted to an agricultural commodity 4 out of the 6 years between 2008 and 2013 crop years
 - ❖ If your land included forage rotations, talk to FSA to see if you are still eligible.
- Located in Iowa or national CRP priority area

- **Expiring CRP**

How do I apply?

- **Visit your local FSA office**
 - Learn your site-specific rental rates
 - Discuss goals for land/operation
 - Share your objectives
 - Verify eligibility
 - Complete offer
 - Determine your rental rate
 - Sign and date the necessary forms (CRP-1 and CRP-2)
 - During the sign up process, did FSA request another form? If so, provide the forms by the date they specified.
- **Applications or bids will compete nationally based on Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)**

What is the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)?

- A point system
- FSA uses these factors to assign points based on the land and cover being offered
- Landowners have choices on the bolded items:
 - **Wildlife cover**
 - Water quality benefits
 - **Reduced erosion**
 - Benefits enduring beyond the contract period
 - Air quality
 - **Cost (accepting a lower rental rate)**

What works for you?



- Different covers have different points, costs, limitations and benefits

Landowner responsibilities

- Establish cover, cost-share available
- If your offer is accepted, mid-contract management is required to maintain healthy vegetative cover
- Management options vary based on the cover chosen
- Based on seeding, landowners can choose among these management options
 - Burning
 - Spraying
 - Disking
 - Interseeding
 - Managed haying/grazing, in conjunction with other authorized options.

CRP can work for your operation



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