

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Quick Sheet

(Technical and Financial Assistance)

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The program is a partnership among producers; tribal, state, and federal governments; and, in some cases, private groups. CREP is an offshoot of the country's largest private-lands environmental improvement program - the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Like CRP, CREP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). CREP addresses high-priority conservation issues of both local and national significance.

ELIGIBILITY

Land must be owned or leased for at least one year prior to enrollment to be eligible, and must be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner. Land must also meet cropping history and other eligibility requirements. Enrollment can be on a continuous basis, permitting farmers and ranchers to join the program at any time rather than waiting for specific sign-up periods.

Enrollment in a state is limited to specific geographic areas and conservation practices. To determine if your land qualifies, contact your local county FSA office.

CREP contracts require a 10- to 15-year commitment to keep lands out of agricultural production. CREP provides payments to participants who offer eligible land. A federal annual rental rate, including an FSA state committee-determined maintenance incentive payment, is offered, plus cost-share of up to 50 percent of the eligible costs to install the practice. Further, the program generally offers a sign-up incentive for participants to install specific practices.

BENEFITS

For the landowner, CREP is not just a cost-effective way to address rural environmental problems and meet regulatory requirements; it can provide a viable option to supplement farm income as well.

CREP supports increased conservation practices such as filter strips and forested buffers. These conservation practices help protect streams, lakes, and rivers from sedimentation and agricultural runoff.

CREP also helps landowners develop and restore wetlands through the planting of appropriate groundcover. Restoring water regimes helps protect national treasures like the Chesapeake Bay, Mammoth Cave, and the Florida Everglades. By maintaining clear goals and requiring annual monitoring, CREP helps participants measure progress and ensure success.

*For more information about this or other funding programs
contact:*

