



GRP is a voluntary conservation program that conserves vulnerable grasslands from conversion to other uses and helps maintain viable agricultural operations.

GRP

Grassland Reserve Program

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Overview

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program to help landowners and land managers protect, restore and enhance rangeland, pastureland, shrubland and other grasslands.

The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations and protection of grasslands that are under threat of conversion to crops, urban development, and other activities. In addition, GRP provides a conservation option for acreage under expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts.

The program helps landowners and operators protect vital grazing lands from conversion, promote local agricultural stability, increase forage production, maintain and improve wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and provide scenic and recreational opportunities.

Administration of GRP is a coordinated effort between the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). FSA is the lead agency responsible for the administration of the rental contracts and financial activities of the program, while NRCS has the lead responsibility for technical assistance, regulatory compliance, and easement administration.

How GRP Works

Landowners or operators who manage their grasslands, have an active grazing operation, and who want to maintain their land and prevent future conversion from uses other than grazing may apply for GRP at their local USDA Service Center.

Those who enroll in GRP voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land in exchange for program payments. GRP participants retain the right to use the land to conduct common grazing practices that are detailed in an NRCS grazing management plan. In some instances, the program participant may request to:

- Produce hay, mow or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of protected bird species);
- Conduct fire rehabilitation; and/or
- Construct firebreaks and fences.

GRP contracts prohibit the production of crops, fruit trees, and vineyards that require breaking the soil surface.

Enrollment Options

Applicants may choose to apply for a permanent easement or a rental agreement.



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Permanent Easement

This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments will be the lowest of the following:

- Fair market value,
- Established payment cap, or
- Amount offered by the landowner.

USDA will provide all administrative costs associated with recording the easement, including appraisal fees, survey costs, title insurance, and recording fees. Easement payments may be provided, at the participant's request, in a lump sum or annual payments for up to 10 years.

Rental Agreement

Participants may choose a 10-year, 15-year, or 20-year contract. Annual payments are based on the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value. County rental rates are determined by FSA and can be found at: https://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/OR/programs/grp/grp-payment_rates.html.

Land Eligibility

Privately owned and Tribal lands may be enrolled in GRP. The land must be grassland, which includes rangeland, pastureland (including improved rangeland and pastureland), shrubland, and certain other lands.

The offered land must:

- Be part of a viable grazing operation,
- Be under the threat of conversion to uses other than grazing, and
- Have plant and animal biodiversity.

Land is not eligible for GRP if it is already protected under an existing contract, easement or deed restriction. In addition, lands may not be enrolled in GRP if they are owned by any entity whose purpose is to protect and conserve grassland and related resources.

There is no maximum or minimum amount of land that may be enrolled by a participant in the program; however, the 2008 Farm Bill limits annual payments for both rental and restoration agreements to a maximum of \$50,000.

Applicant Eligibility

Landowners who can provide a clear title on privately owned lands are eligible to participate for either easement option. Landowners and others who have general control of the acreage may submit an application for a rental agreement.

To be eligible to GRP, applicants must also:

- Have an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$1 million or less, unless two-thirds of that is derived from agriculture, ranching or forestry; and
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the Farm Bill.

Additional eligibility information can be found online at: <https://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/OR/programs/grp/grp-eligibility.html>.

Application Selection

Applications will be ranked and prioritized for funding based on the length of the proposed agreement, overall conservation benefit, benefits to biodiversity, and other factors. Lands enrolled in CRP contracts that will expire in the next 12 months will also receive funding priority.

Specific ranking criteria can be found online at: <https://or.nrcs.usda.gov/OR/programs/grp/grp-ranking.html>.

More Information

For more information about GRP, please contact the nearest USDA Service Center or your local NRCS or FSA representative:

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service:

www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA Farm Service Agency:

www.fsa.usda.gov

