

What USDA Offers

| | Program | What Land is Eligible? | Length of Agreement | Contract Payments | Easements | Program Payments | Producer Responsibilities |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Financial Assistance Programs | Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program | Private or Tribal land in agricultural production including cropland, hayland, pastureland, rangeland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. | 1-10 years | | | Payments support practice implementation based on incurred cost and income foregone* | Develop and follow an AMA plan that describes the conservation and environmental objectives. Contribute to installation costs. |
| | Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) | Private, public, and Tribal land in agricultural production including cropland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRRP. | Up to 5 years for AWEP partnership agreements; 1-10 years for producer EQIP contracts | | | Payments support practice implementation based on incurred cost and income foregone* | Develop and follow an AWEP EQIP plan that addresses water conservation and water quality and describes the environmental objectives. Incur installation costs. |
| | Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) | Private or Tribal agricultural land and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, GRRP, or Conservation Security Program. | 5 years; 5-year renewal option, subject to funding availability | Annual payment based on level of conservation stewardship; supplemental payment available for participants who adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation | | | Implement a conservation stewardship plan that addresses resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by installing and adopting additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities. |
| | Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) | Private, public, and Tribal land in agricultural production including cropland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRRP. | 1-10 years | | | Payments support practice implementation based on incurred cost and income foregone* | Develop and follow EQIP plan of operations that describes the conservation and environmental objectives. Incur installation costs. |
| | Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) | Private or Tribal agricultural land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, HFRP, or a similar program. | 1-10 years, or minimum of 15 years for long-term agreements for critical habitat | | | Payments support practice implementation based on incurred cost* | Prepare and follow WHIP plan of operations that describes the wildlife habitat objectives to be achieved. Contribute to installation costs. |
| Easement Programs | Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) | Private land that contains at least 50% prime, State, or locally important farmland; contains historic or archeological resources; or supports the policies of a State, local farm, or ranch protection program. Includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and forest land. | Cooperative agreements obligate funds annually to entities that acquire permanent easements | | One-time, up-front payment or up to five annual payments | | Continue to use the land for agricultural purposes. Comply with conservation plan for highly erodible land and terms of conservation easement deed. |
| | Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) | Private or Tribal grassland, shrubland, land containing forbs (including improved rangeland and pastureland) for which grazing is the predominant use, and land in an area that historically contained those features. | 10-, 15-, and 20-year rental contracts or permanent easements | Annual rental payment based on county rate determined by FSA | One-time, up-front payment or up to 10 annual payments | 50% of actual cost | Develop and comply with a grazing management plan for the easement, rental contract, or restoration agreement. Contribute to installation costs and maintain practices. |
| | Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) | Non-industrial private or Tribal forest land capable of supporting habitat for a selected wildlife species. | 10-year cost-share agreements, 30-year contracts, and 30-year or permanent easements | | One-time, up-front payment or up to 10 annual payments | Up to 75% for cost-share agreements, 30-year contracts, and 30-year easements; up to 100% for permanent easements | Develop and implement HFRP restoration plan that promotes restoration, protection, enhancement and maintenance of forest land functions and values. Contribute to installation costs. |
| | Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) | Private or Tribal farmed wetlands or wetlands converted prior to December 23, 1985, and adjacent lands that maximize wildlife benefits. | 30-year or permanent easements, 30-year contracts, or cost-share restoration agreements | | One-time, up-front payment or up to 30 annual payments for either easement option or 30-year contract | Up to 75% for restoration cost-share agreements, 30-year contracts, and 30-year easements; 100% for permanent easements | Develop and implement WRP plan of operations for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland. Contribute to restoration costs. |

All programs are subject to final USDA regulations. *Historically underserved participants may be eligible for increased payment rates up to 90%; EQIP offers up to 30%.

FAQ

frequentlyaskedquestions

How do I improve the chances of my conservation program application being accepted?

Most program applications are selected according to ranking processes specific to your area. Working with your local NRCS representative, you can develop a conservation plan for your land that provides alternatives for various levels of resource treatment relevant to application ranking considerations in your area. You can select the level of treatment that best meets your individual needs while improving your chances of being accepted for funding.

If I enroll my land in a conservation program, do I maintain ownership?

Am I required to allow public access to my land?

If you enroll land in any of our conservation programs, you retain ownership of the land. Although participation in conservation easement programs limits certain uses of the land during the term of the agreement or easement, you still maintain control of public access.

Will I be responsible for maintaining practices that I install under a conservation program?

All programs require practice operation and maintenance as stated in the agreement.

What types of wildlife will I attract if I enroll in conservation programs?

The practices you implement and the plants you establish will affect the types of wildlife you attract to your land. Practices can be designed and managed to attract particular species, such as turkey, quail, deer, songbirds, and other wildlife species.



PA - 2037 November 2009

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Conservation practices and programs for your land

Helping People Help the Land



2008 FARM BILL: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Conservation practices & programs for your land

What's in It For you?

The 2008 Farm Bill offers America's agricultural producers and non-industrial private forest landowners more assistance than ever before to voluntarily conserve natural resources on our Nation's privately owned farm and ranch lands. Its provisions provide technical and financial assistance to help producers implement conservation practices that reduce erosion, protect our waters, improve fish and wildlife habitat, improve air quality, and conserve energy. This guide introduces the assistance available.

For long-term contracts and conservation easements. Whether through an agreement or easement purchase, all programs include Federal Funds to assist with or offset costs of conservation practices and activities.

Technical Assistance

NRCS helps customers plan and implement conservation practices on private lands through technical assistance of the highest quality and standards. Technical assistance is also available through certified Technical Service Providers (TSPs).

Partnerships Enhance Assistance to NRCS Private Land Programs

NRCS works with many partners to deliver conservation services and programs. Partners such as local conservation districts, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, Cooperative Extension, State natural resource agencies, and nongovernmental conservation organizations all play important roles. Professionals in each organization provide technical help. Additional educational and financial assistance for establishing conservation practices on farms and ranches may be available.

Financial & Economic Incentives

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers a variety of programs to producers and landowners interested in conservation. Some programs offer annual conservation payments, others offer payments

For More Information

Contact your local NRCS Office, USDA Service Center, or local conservation district, or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Water Erosion

Curbing water erosion

To reduce soil movement and nutrient runoff, consider these or similar practices:

- Grassed waterways
- Residue management
- Grassed riparian buffers
- Grade stabilization structures
- Contour buffer strips

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, AMA, WHIP, CSP

Wind Erosion

Curbing wind damage

To mitigate the effects of wind on farm and ranch lands, consider these or similar practices:

- Residue management
- Shelterbelts
- Windbreaks
- Field stripcropping

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, WHIP, CSP

Soil

Conserving soil and water resources

To improve soil and water quality, consider these or similar practices:

- Nutrient management
- Pest management
- Crop rotation
- Filter strips
- Riparian buffers
- Surface water management

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, AWEP, AMA, WHIP, CSP

Waterways

Protecting waterways from erosion and degradation

Consider these or similar practices:

- Riparian buffers
- Filter strips
- Stream crossings
- Stream bank stabilization/Shoreline protection

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, WHIP, AMA, CSP, CRP

Manure

Managing manure

To prevent nutrient loss and protect air, soil, water, fish, and wildlife resources, consider these or similar practices:

- Waste storage structures and lagoons
- Nutrient management
- Compost facilities
- Waste utilization

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, CBWI

Grasslands

Managing grasslands

To improve forage quality, control invasive species, and conserve fish and wildlife habitat, consider these or similar practices:

- Prescribed grazing
- Pest management
- Prescribed burning
- Watering facilities
- Brush management

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, GRP, WHIP, WRP, CSP, CRP

Wildlife

Establishing wildlife habitat

To enhance, restore, manage and protect fish and wildlife habitat, consider these or similar practices:

- Upland/Wetland habitat management
- Wetland restoration
- Forest stand improvement
- Stream habitat improvement
- Prescribed burning
- Tree/Shrub establishment

Begin with a look at these programs: WHIP, WRP, GRP, EQIP, HFRP, CSP

Forest Lands

Managing Forest lands

To restore and protect forest resources and improve fish and wildlife habitat, consider these or similar practices:

- Tree planting
- Forest stand improvement, thinning
- Prescribed burning
- Controlling invasive plants

Begin with a look at these programs: HFRP, WHIP, EQIP, CSP

Air, Energy & Climate Change

Improving air quality, conserving energy, and mitigating climate change

Consider these or similar practices:

- Residue management
- Dust abatement
- Cover crops
- Conservation buffers
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt plantings
- Tree planting
- Conversion of cropland to grassland

Begin with a look at these programs: EQIP, AMA, HFRP, GRP, CSP