



NEWSLETTER



January 2016

Nebraska State FSA Office
7131 A Street
Lincoln, NE 68510-4202

Ph: (402) 437-5581
Fax: (402) 437-5280

Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

State Executive Director
Dan Steinkruger

State FSA Committee
Susan Frazier
Fred Christensen
Leo Hoehn
Linda Kleinschmit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CRP Celebrated it's 30th Anniversary.....	1
CRP Rental Rates	2
CRP Enrollment Types	3
Popular CRP Practices in Nebraska	3-5
CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP).....	5
CRP Informational Meetings	5

Website
www.fsa.usda.gov/ne

The Conservation Reserve Program is 30 Years Old

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) celebrated it's 30th Anniversary.



The program was started in 1985 in an effort to reduce soil erosion. Over the years, the program has evolved to include more than 43 practices designed to give participants maximum flexibility while installing conservation practices on their farms. To view a video about CRP and it's benefits, visit <https://youtu.be/CW6vWFtad2s>.

Do you have an area on your farm that is not as productive? Do you have an area that is a gully that should be a waterway? Do you have areas along streams that would benefit from being buffered? If so, the CRP program might be a perfect fit for your farming operation.

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In exchange for establishing long-term, resource conserving covers, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants.

CRP is the largest private lands conservation program in the United States. CRP is also the largest USDA conservation program and continues to make major contri-

butions to national efforts to improve water and air quality, prevent soil erosion, and protect the most sensitive areas, including those prone to flash flooding and runoff. At the same time, CRP has helped increase populations of pheasants, quail and ducks and is recognized as benefiting certain rare species such as the sage grouse, the lesser prairie chicken and other grassland birds.

CRP participation has resulted in a boom to the pheasant and white-tailed deer populations throughout the plains states and the Midwest. Non-game grassland birds, one of the

fastest declining groups of birds in the country, have also responded positively to CRP habitat, staving off declines



Western Meadowlark
Photo Provided by:
NEBRASKAland Magazine

which could lead to increased listings of threatened and endangered species. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), landowners have the opportunity to create wildlife and pollinator habitat in conjunction with reducing erosion and nutrient runoff. CRP buffer programs can be utilized on uplands or bottom fields.

By utilizing any one of the multiple CRP practices that are available, producers can

receive an annual rental payment on acreage that in many cases may be less productive or subject to wildlife damage.

FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent using data provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) or cash rent equivalent as guidelines. The maximum CRP rental rate for each offer is calculated in advance of enrollment. Producers may offer land at that rate or offer a lower rental rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

CRP Rental Rates

In an effort to better reflect location and market conditions, CRP soil rental rates for non-irrigated cropland were updated this year. The table below reflects average CRP soil rental rates in effect as of 12/1/2015.

Over the last 30 years, highlights of CRP accomplishments include:

- The restoration of more than two million acres of wetlands and two million acres of riparian buffers.
- Prevention of more than 600 million pounds of nitrogen and more than 100 million pounds of phosphorous from flowing into our nation's streams, rivers, and lakes.
- Providing \$1.8 billion annually to landowners — dollars that make their way into local economies, supporting small businesses and creating jobs.
- Sequestering more carbon than any other conservation program in the country. By placing vulnerable cropland into conservation, CRP sequesters carbon in plants and soil and reduces both fuel and fertilizer usage.

CRP protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion and is designed to safeguard the nation's natural resources. By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams. The vegetative covers

County Name	Average Soil Rental Rate per Acre for 2016	County Name	Average Soil Rental Rate per Acre for 2016	County Name	Average Soil Rental Rate per Acre for 2016	County Name	Average Soil Rental Rate per Acre for 2016
Adams	\$141	Dawson	\$112	Howard	\$133	Pierce	\$212
Antelope	\$153	Deuel	\$39	Jefferson	\$147	Platte	\$205
Arthur	\$23	Dixon	\$282	Johnson	\$169	Polk	\$177
Banner	\$36	Dodge	\$229	Kearney	\$128	Red Willow	\$65
Blaine	\$23	Douglas	\$234	Keith	\$47	Richardson	\$238
Boone	\$191	Dundy	\$46	Keya Paha	\$53	Rock	\$42
Box Butte	\$45	Fillmore	\$147	Kimball	\$34	Saline	\$156
Boyd	\$90	Franklin	\$107	Knox	\$190	Sarpy	\$242
Brown	\$28	Frontier	\$63	Lancaster	\$165	Saunders	\$202
Buffalo	\$128	Furnas	\$70	Lincoln	\$56	Scotts Bluff	\$43
Burt	\$256	Gage	\$156	Logan	\$61	Seward	\$193
Butler	\$216	Garden	\$37	Loup	\$56	Sheridan	\$39
Cass	\$226	Garfield	\$62	McPherson	\$57	Sherman	\$119
Cedar	\$275	Gosper	\$80	Madison	\$216	Sioux	\$47
Chase	\$56	Grant	\$23	Merrick	\$143	Stanton	\$227
Cherry	\$33	Greeley	\$135	Morrill	\$45	Thayer	\$126
Cheyenne	\$39	Hall	\$121	Nance	\$140	Thomas	\$23
Clay	\$153	Hamilton	\$143	Nemaha	\$208	Thurston	\$265
Colfax	\$239	Harlan	\$92	Nuckolls	\$149	Valley	\$95
Cuming	\$283	Hayes	\$55	Otoe	\$191	Washington	\$241
Custer	\$79	Hitchcock	\$54	Pawnee	\$139	Wayne	\$250
Dakota	\$321	Holt	\$62	Perkins	\$46	Webster	\$128
Dawes	\$47	Hooker	\$23	Phelps	\$124	Wheeler	\$91
						York	\$182

also make CRP a major contributor to increased wildlife populations in many parts of the country.

CRP Enrollment Types

Under CRP general enrollment authority, producers can offer land for CRP only during announced enrollment periods.

On May 29, 2015, the Secretary announced the 49th General CRP signup period currently underway through February 26, 2016. Land not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during this signup. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on September 30, 2016, may submit offers. Accepted contracts for CRP signup 49 will become effective on October 1, 2016. This is a great opportunity to offer land for enrollment in the CRP program. This is an important time for farmers and ranchers to evaluate whether they might benefit from enrolling ground into the general CRP program.



Under CRP continuous enrollment authority, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time. Certain eligibility requirements still apply, but offers are not subject to the competitive bidding process.

For both general and continuous signup, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to close of the CRP signup period. Land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity for four of the previous six crop years from 2008 to 2013, and that is physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance can be an amount not more than 50 percent of the participants' costs in establishing approved practices.

FSA recently introduced a CRP Grasslands practice that is intended for ground that in some cases has no cropping history and assists landowners and operators in protecting

grasslands, including rangeland, pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, grasslands and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under federal or state law), conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences.

The CRP Grasslands program is the newest continuous practice for Nebraska with two million acres available to be enrolled nationwide. This practice helps producers protect grassland, rangeland and pastureland while maintaining the acres as grazing lands. This practice has been nicknamed "The Working Lands CRP" due to the fact that producers are eligible to hay and graze their enrolled acres according to their approved haying and grazing conservation plan.

Under a CRP Grasslands contract, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value of the land covered by the agreement as determined by FSA for the life of the agreement. These rental rates vary by county. The rental rates for the CRP Grasslands program range from \$15.00 per acre to \$40.00 per acre, depending on the county.

Applications for CRP Grasslands will be ranked after each batching period using Grassland Ranking Factors. FSA collects data for each of the ranking factors based on the relative benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from that ranking.

Interested participants may file applications with FSA at any time. These applications will be batched and reviewed several times a year to determine which applications can be approved.

The first batching period for the CRP Grasslands program ended November 20, 2015. We are currently in the second batching period. At this time there is no end date for this second batching period.

Popular CRP Practices in Nebraska

CP2 - Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses

This practice is designed to establish new or maintain existing vegetative cover of native grasses on eligible cropland that will enhance environmental benefits.

CP2 is offered during a general CRP signup and continuous signup in wellhead protection areas. CRP contract length is 10 years. The seeded area shall not be harvested or grazed by domestic livestock for the life of the contract unless authorized under managed harvesting and routine grazing or emergency haying and grazing. You will be required to perform periodic management activities according to the conservation plan developed by the Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) or Technical Service Provider (TSP) and approved by the County Committee (COC).

CP5A - Field Windbreak

Field windbreaks protect cropland from wind erosion while adding protection for crops, livestock, and homesteads.

Strong winds can cause catastrophic damage on farms.

Windbreaks containing rows of trees and shrubs are designed to reduce damage from wind. Windbreaks also provide food, cover and travel corridors for wildlife and gamebirds.



Field windbreak contract lifespan is 10-15 years. Windbreaks developed for wildlife purposes cannot exceed five rows of trees. Annual rental payments are based on the dryland soil rental rate of the land being offered for CRP plus an additional 20% Rental Rate Incentive. Acres enrolled in practice CP5A may be eligible for a one-time Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre. Payments of 90% of the eligible cost of establishing the practice will be issued to participants. (Participants will receive 50% cost share to establish the grasses and shrubs, paid as invoices are submitted. An additional 40% Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) is issued after the practice is completely installed.)

CP16A – Shelterbelt

One of the more popular continuous CRP practices in Western Nebraska is for establishment of shelterbelts and field windbreaks. Producers have taken advantage of the long-term, resource-conserving practice of planting multiple tree rows to aid in wind and water erosion while benefiting wildlife and livestock. Two- to five-row shelterbelts and field windbreaks manicure the vast rolling hills and cropped acres in Nebraska’s panhandle. Another common practice used by conservation minded land owners is mixing both general and continuous practices by installing shelterbelts on the exterior perimeter of a field as wind breaks, then en-

rolling the center of that field into General CRP and establishing grasses for wildlife habitat.

CP21 – Filter Strips

This practice is used to remove nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides, and other pollutants from surface runoff and subsurface flow by deposition, absorption, plant uptake, denitrification, and other processes, and thereby reduce pollution and protect surface water and subsurface water quality while enhancing the ecosystem of the water body.



These areas may average up to 120 feet from a stream.

CP25 - Rare and Declining Habitat

The purpose of this practice is to restore the function and value of critically endangered and threatened habitats. The extent of the restoration is determined by the specifications developed at the State level. This practice is well suited for wildlife food and habitat. Selection of native grasses and forb species will affect what type of wildlife will utilize these acres.

CP25 is a practice that is offered through a general signup. Participants can not harvest or graze the practice area.

CP38E Grass - Upland Game Birds

The entire state of Nebraska is eligible for SAFE CP38E. Through State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), participants re-establish grasses and shrub thickets on their land. This practice is designed to enhance Upland Bird populations by creating critical habitat and food sources.

The size of these fields must average at least five acres and not exceed 160 acres. Con-



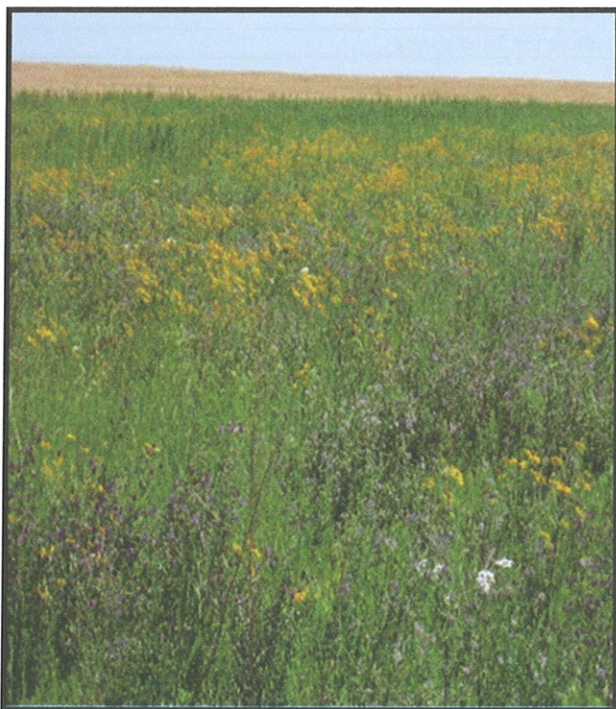
tract life span is 10-15 years. Annual rental payments are based on the dryland soil rental rate of the land being offered for CRP. Acres enrolled in practice CP38E may be eligible for a one-time Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre. Payments of 90% of the eligible cost for establishing the practice will be issued to participants. (Participants will receive 50% cost share to establish the grasses and shrubs, paid as invoices are submitted. An additional 40% Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) is issued after the practice is completely installed.)

CP42 - Pollinator Habitat

Honeybee populations have experienced large declines over the past ten years. A lack of food and habitat is believed to be a major factor for these declines. Establishing seed mixes that provide pollen and nectar will create healthy environments for honeybees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Insects are responsible for pollinating more than one third of the foods we eat.

The size of these fields must be at least 0.5 acre. There is no maximum acre limit on this practice. Contract life is 10 years. Annual rental payments are based on the dryland soil rental rate of the land being offered for CRP. Acres enrolled in practice CP42 may be eligible for a one-time Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$150 per acre. Participants will receive 50% cost share to establish the practice, paid after submission of invoices.

Many farms have pivot corners, areas that are difficult to farm, or areas that are less productive than the rest of the farm. With commodity prices leveling off, conservation



programs offer a viable alternative for many farmers and ranchers. Every farm, pivot corner or “north 40” has at least half an acre that could benefit from a CRP practice. As great stewards of the land, it is extremely important that

we preserve and conserve the land that we do have because we cannot produce any more! Indeed, every farm in America could be more profitable and financially secure while providing wildlife benefits using a combination of conservation practices in harmony with row crop production. If you would like more information on any of these CRP practices, contact your local FSA Office for more details.

CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP)

The Transition Incentives Program (TIP) offers assistance for retired or retiring land owners and operators, as well as opportunities for beginning, veteran and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. It provides the retired/retiring land owners or operators with two additional annual rental payments on land enrolled in expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts, on the condition they sell or rent this land to a beginning, veteran or a socially disadvantaged (non-family member) farmer or rancher. Up to two additional annual CRP payments can be obtained through TIP. New land owners or renters must return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods.

TIP provides retiring land owners and operators with an incentive to return land to production on an expiring CRP contract in a way that preserves established conservation practices. It also provides an opportunity for beginning, veteran and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to purchase their own land or to rent land.

Only land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract is eligible. TIP enrollment is on a continuous basis, and may occur up to one year before a contract is set to expire. To qualify for TIP, the retiring land owner or operator must either sell this land, or lease it on a long-term basis (at least five years), to a beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.

CRP Informational Meetings

A series of informational meetings will be held across the state outlining the Conservation Reserve Program. Plan to attend if you have an interest in learning more about how conservation programs can work to increase income on your farm or ranch. Additional incentives may exist in some areas. Please contact your local USDA office to RSVP and speak with a local Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist. Visit www.NebraskaPF.com or www.CRPSignup.com for more information. Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these meetings should contact **Gina Germer** at (402) 437-5581, or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, and gina.germer@ne.usda.gov two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Nebraska Farm Service Agency
7131 A Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68510-4202



United States
Department
of Agriculture

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
USDA-FSA
PERMIT #G-96

FSA Dates to Remember	
December 1, 2015	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup began
January 4, 2016	Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) deadline for 2016 honey
January 4, 2016	2016 initial reports for honeybee colonies and locations
February 1, 2016	Deadline to submit 2015 Livestock Incentive Program (LIP) application for payment and supporting documentation
February 1, 2016	Deadline to request 2015 Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) or Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for mohair, unshorn pelts (LDP Only), and wool
February 26, 2016	Deadline for CRP General signup
March 15, 2016	2016 NAP sales closing date for alfalfa, mixed forage, spring-seeded annual crops, grass, and sorghum forage
March 31, 2016	Deadline to request 2015 MAL's or LDP's for barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat, and sesame seed
May 31, 2016	Deadline to request 2015 MAL's or LDP's for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seed

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, write to the address below or if you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and lender employer.