

Fact Sheet

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The CRP program offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish approved cover on eligible cropland. To be eligible for CRP, land must have been planted to an agricultural commodity four of the last six crop years.

General signup for CRP

Offers for CRP general sign-up contracts are ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). The EBI is used to rank land offered for enrollment in CRP during a general signup period. Scores are based on the expected environmental improvement in soil resources, water quality, wildlife habitat and other resource concerns during the time the land is to be enrolled in the program. Each offer submitted by a landowner is assigned a point score based on its relative environmental benefits and is compared nationally with all other offers. Offers are accepted or rejected based on the resulting ranking.

Enrollment in general CRP occurs during signup periods, which may be announced at any time and usually last for a four-week period.

Continuous signup for CRP

For certain high-priority conservation practices yielding highly desirable environmental benefits, landowners may sign up at any time, without waiting for an announced signup period. Unlike the general CRP program, signup for these special practices is open continuously. Provided certain eligibility requirements are met, acreage is automatically accepted into the program at a per-acre rental rate.



Eligible practices for continuous CRP

The following practices are eligible for continuous CRP signup in Scott County:

BI is used to rank land offered for enrollment in CRP during a general signup period.

- **Filter Strips.** Areas of grass, legumes and other non-woody vegetation that filter runoff and wastewater by trapping sediment, pesticides, organic matter and other pollutants. Filter strips are planted on cropland at the edge of perennial streams, rivers or adjacent to bodies of water. The width and types of vegetation established in the filter area are determined by site conditions.
- **Shelterbelts, field windbreaks and living snow fences.** Belts of trees or shrubs are planted in single or multiple rows. Such tree rows and hedges reduce wind erosion, improve air quality and provide food and shelter for wildlife. They can also shelter structures and livestock. Field windbreaks prevent wind erosion. Living snow fences provide similar benefits, but are specifically located to manage snow.
- **Grass Waterways.** Channels, either natural or constructed, that are planted with suitable vegetation to protect soil from erosion. Grass waterways help heal gullies and washouts and greatly reduce loss of topsoil and sedimentation of streams, ponds and lakes.
- **Riparian Buffers.** Areas of trees and/or shrubs next to ponds, lakes and streams that filter out pollutants from runoff as well as providing food and shelter for wildlife.
- **Shallow water areas for wildlife.** Small areas to provide cover and a water source for wildlife. Water is impounded and is surrounded by a small area planted with permanent cover.
- **Farmable Wetland and Buffer.** Historic wetlands currently being farmed, may be converted back to a wetland with a buffer strip surrounding the wetland.

For more information:

Landowners interested in the general CRP signup or the continuous signup may contact the NRCS, (952) 492-5425, or the Farm Service Agency, (952) 492-6671.

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