

# Vermont

## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



### Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of Vermont are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 7,500 acres of agricultural land within the State of Vermont. The Vermont CREP is intended to enhance wildlife habitat and reduce pollutant loading to Lake Champlain, the Connecticut River, Lake Memphremagog, and the Hudson River.

### Background

CREP is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded 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 permanent, 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 return, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with one-time incentive payments, annual rental payments and cost-share assistance.

With CREP, high-priority conservation goals are identified by the state, and then federal funds are supplemented with non-federal funds to achieve those goals.

Through the Vermont CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for 10 to 15-year contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees, or other approved vegetation. This will improve water quality by reducing sediment, nutrients, nitrogen

and other pollutants from entering streams and rivers, and enhance wildlife habitat in the area.

### Goals

The goals of the Vermont CREP include:

- ◆ To supplement efforts to reduce non-point source phosphorus pollution by 48.3 tons per year;
- ◆ To supplement efforts to reduce nitrogen pollution by 35 percent per year; and
- ◆ To provide secondary benefits to wildlife and aquatic habitat.

### Eligible Conservation Practices

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

#### CRP Practices

CP8A	Grass Waterway
CP21	Filter Strips
CP22	Riparian Buffer
CP23	Wetland Restoration

### Enrollment And Eligibility Requirements

Enrollment in CRP through the Vermont CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located within the Lake Champlain Basin, Connecticut River Basin, Lake Memphremagog, and Hudson River Basin watersheds and be either cropland or marginal pastureland.

### For More Information

Contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

#### Vermont USDA Farm Service Agency

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Colchester, VT 05446  
Phone: (802) 658-2803  
Fax: (855) 794-3676

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details.



## Enrollment And Eligibility Requirements Continued

Cropland must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Marginal pastureland is also eligible for enrollment provided it is suitable for use as riparian buffer.

## Payments

Under the Vermont CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- ◆ A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) for enrolling practices CP8A, CP21, and CP22, to the extent and in the amount that SIP would normally be paid for such practices.

- ◆ A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for eligible practices.
- ◆ An annual rental payment consisting of normal CRP county cropland soil rental rates.
- ◆ A cost-share payment of up to 50 percent of the eligible cost to install the approved practice.
- ◆ Maintenance payments in the amount that would normally be paid for eligible practices.

In addition, the State of Vermont provides a one-time upfront payment of \$117 per acre of land which has produced an annual crop at least 3 out of the last 6 years and \$53 per acre of land which has produced an annual crop fewer than 3 of the last 6 years, and \$21 per acre of marginal pastureland, multiplied by the number of years of the contract period.

## Enrollment Options

CREP is another option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll land in CRP through general or continuous signup; however, the Vermont CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous signup. Under the Vermont CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments and longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

## Haying And Grazing

Contact your local FSA office for more information about authorized haying and grazing activities.