

September 2016

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – New York – 12 Watersheds

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the State of New York are partners in implementing a voluntary Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to enroll up to 40,000 acres of agricultural land in Albany, Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orange, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westchester, Wyoming and Yates counties. The New York 12 Watersheds CREP is intended to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other pollutants entering waterbodies, improve wildlife habitat and restore wetlands.

BACKGROUND

CREP is a 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 is used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish permanent resource conserving plants 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 rental payments and cost-share assistance. CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014.

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

Through the New York 12 Watersheds CREP, federal and state resources are made available to program participants to voluntarily enroll in CRP for a minimum of 10-year, not to exceed 15-year, contracts. Participants remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to grasses, trees and other vegetation or restore wetlands. This will improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, reduce the amount of sediment, phosphorous and other pollutants entering waterbodies, and improve wildlife habitat.

GOALS

The goals of the New York 12 Watersheds CREP are to:

- Reduce the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, sediment and other pollutants entering waterbodies within the project area;

- Establish tree buffers adjacent to 4,598 stream miles and 473,457 acres of surface waters; and
- Establish approved covers on areas that recharge drinking water supplies for cities and towns.

ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION PRACTICES

The following specific CRP conservation practices are available:

- CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes;
- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses;
- CP3, Tree Planting;
- CP3A, Hardwood Tree Planting;
- CP4B, Permanent Wildlife Habitat (Corridors), Non-Easement;
- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Non-Easement;
- CP8A, Grass Waterways;
- CP9, Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife;
- CP15A, Establishment of Permanent Vegetative Cover (Contour Grassed Strips);
- CP21, Filter Strips;
- CP22, Riparian Buffer;
- CP23, Wetland Restoration;
- CP23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain;
- CP29, Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer; and
- CP30, Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer.

ENROLLMENT AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Signup for the New York 12 Watersheds CREP is on a continuous basis. To be eligible, land must be located in the project area and be either cropland or marginal pastureland. 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 a buffer practice.

PAYMENTS

Under the New York 12 Watersheds CREP, eligible participants may receive the following payments:

- A one-time signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre for installing practice CP8A, CP21, CP22, CP29 and CP30; and \$150 per acre for installing practice CP23 and CP23A. Example: 10 acres enrolled to be devoted to practice CP21 results in a \$1,000 (10 acres times \$100) SIP. This payment is made after the contract has been signed and approved.
- A one-time practice incentive payment (PIP) for installing practice CP8A, CP9, CP15A, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP23A, CP29 and CP30. The PIP is equal to 40 percent of the total

eligible cost of installing the practice. Example: Producer's total eligible reimbursable cost for installing practice CP21 is \$2,000. The PIP would be \$800 (\$2,000 times .40).

- An annual rental payment consisting of:
 - A base soil rental rate, determined by (1) for cropland, the three predominant soils of the land offered; or (2) for marginal pastureland, the posted marginal pastureland rate for the county;
 - An incentive payment, as a percentage of the base soil rental rate, of 145 percent; and
 - A maintenance payment, determined by the practice offered.
- Cost-share payments of up to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable cost of installing the approved practice.
- A one-time Chesapeake Bay incentive payment in an amount equal to \$25 per acre times the number of acres enrolled times the number of full years of the CRP contract length. This one-time payment is available only for practice CP22 and only for land located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Example: 10 acres of land within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed is enrolled in a 14-year and 7 month CRP contract to be devoted to practice CP22. The one-time Chesapeake Bay incentive payment is \$3,500 (\$25 times 10 acres times 14 years).

Note: Land enrolled under the infeasible to farm provisions is not eligible for any incentive payments.

In addition, the State of New York:

- May provide some cost-share payments for the installation of an approved practice; and
- Will provide a one-time incentive payment for enrollment of new land located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to be devoted to practice CP22. The one-time payment will be between five and 15 times the per-acre base soil rental rate, determined by the type of land enrolled and the width of the riparian buffer.

EXAMPLES

A Broome County producer elects to enroll 10 acres of land to be devoted to a riparian buffer (practice CP22) in a 15-year contract. The riparian buffer will be an average width of 45 feet. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$40 per acre. The incentive payment is \$58 per acre (\$40 times 1.45). The annual maintenance payment is \$10 per acre. The producer's annual rental rate will be \$108 per acre (\$40 + \$58 + \$10) for a total annual payment of \$1,080 (\$108 times 10 acres). The producer will receive \$16,200 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. In addition, the producer will receive the following payments:

- A one-time SIP of \$1,000 (10 acres x \$100);
- Cost-share payments from FSA equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the riparian buffer;
- A one-time PIP equal to 40 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the riparian buffer;
- Cost-share payments from the State of New York equal to 10 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the riparian buffer;
- A one-time Chesapeake Bay incentive payment from FSA of \$3,750 (\$25 x 10 acres x 15 years); and
- A one-time incentive payment from the State of New York of \$400 (10 x \$40).

An Ontario County producer elects to enroll 20 acres of land located in an approved public wellhead area to be devoted to native grasses (practice CP2) in a 15-year contract. The base soil rental rate for the land is \$71 per acre. The incentive payment is \$103 per acre (\$71 times 1.45). The producer's annual rental rate will be \$174 per acre (\$71 + \$103) for a total annual payment of \$3,480 (\$174 times 20 acres). The producer will receive \$52,200 in annual rental payments over the 15-year term of the CRP contract. The producer will receive cost-share payments equal to 50 percent of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the native grasses, plus a PIP equal to 40 percent of the cost of the eligible reimbursable costs to install the native grasses. In addition, the producer will receive cost-share payments equal to 10 percent of the cost to install the native grasses from the State of New York.

Note: The preceding are examples only.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

CREP is another option under CRP that farmers and ranchers may select to enhance their land. Eligible producers may still enroll eligible land in CRP through general or continuous signup; however, the New York 12 Watersheds CREP provides additional benefits not available through general and/or continuous enrollment. Under the New York 12 Watersheds CREP, producers receive higher incentive payments and have longer contract lengths that increase the total amount of rental payments received.

HAYING AND GRAZING

Haying and grazing are not allowed during the CRP contract period unless authorized by USDA. Contact your local FSA office for information about authorized haying and grazing activities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. For more information on CREP, contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

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