

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program - CREP

Enrollment Process

Step 1. Visit your local FSA Office.

Schedule an appointment at your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office to discuss CREP, and submit a preliminary application, if you decide that CREP is right for you. The request consists of the acres that you may wish to place in CREP and the possible practice that you wish to have on your land.

Step 2. FSA checks land eligibility (cropping history) and producer eligibility.

The FSA checks the slopes, EI <Erosion Index> for the acres offered. The FSA also checks for initiatives of National or Regional importance such as Forested Riparian Buffers.

The FSA begins the offer process and completes the CRP-2C worksheet with the applicant, and submits the form and map to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Step 3. NRCS (or cooperating Technical Service Provider or “TSP”) performs a site visit.

NRCS or TSP will schedule a site visit with the participant to discuss conservation goals and to gather CREP practice suitability and eligibility information for the FSA. If the producer agrees to suggestions, the acres in question will be validated either as established fields or the exact acreage may be measured through the use of GPS to ensure accurate measurements.

Step 4. FSA develops a preliminary CREP enrollment offer and notifies the CREP applicant.

The FSA will determine eligibility for the CREP offer and calculate the soil rental rate (payment per acre) which includes incentive rates available. FSA will notify the applicant and explain the contract details.

Step 5. Potential CREP enrollee accepts or declines further interest in CREP.

Within 30 days of receiving the offer eligibility determination from the FSA, the applicant must contact the FSA to either accept or decline the offer. The decision is **voluntary** and involves no further communication if declined. The CPR-2C worksheet must be signed at this time to continue the process.

Step 6. CREP participant and NRCS/TSP develop a CREP Conservation Plan.

NRCS/TSP works closely with the CREP applicant to develop a site-specific conservation plan, including a detailed map which identifies the CREP Conservation Practice(s) to be installed on the site.

FSA cost share will be included in the Conservation Plan.

Step 7. The FSA develops a CREP contract.

NRCS will provide a copy of the CREP Conservation Plan to the FSA. The FSA will make an appointment with the CREP applicant to complete all required paperwork, which includes the CRP-1 contract signing. This will include any incentives or matching funds available for the practices in question. At this point, enrollment in CREP is formalized and the agreement is contractually binding.

Step 8. CREP Conservation Practice Installment.

The CREP participant is responsible for installing CREP conservation Practice(s), or independently using a CREP installation contractor (list available at the NRCS office), and then seeking reimbursement by reporting the practice has been completed and submitting bills for the total eligible costs for the FSA for payment. The NRCS must validate that the practice has been installed according to practice standards before payment is made. Establishment of the practice must take place during the first year of contract approval.

Step 9. CREP Conservation Practice maintenance during the life of the contract.

[The CREP participant is responsible for the required practice maintenance for the life of the CREP contract.] Maintenance involves on-the-ground evaluation including annual noxious weed control as needed and may involve replanting of required practice vegetation at the participants expense, such as grasses, trees, and shrubs. Failure to maintain the practice may result in noncompliance, which may risk contract termination and the return of all payments received by the participants, plus penalties and interest.

Step 10. Continuing your CREP contract.

In the last year of your contract, you may have the opportunity to re-enroll for another 10 or 15 year contract. It is important, not only for contract compliance, to keep your CREP practice maintained as originally planned. Refer to the Re-enrollment tab at the PA CREP website www.creppa.org for specific details for each of the CREP/CRP practices.

To contact Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Berks Co call: (610) 478-7158 ext. 2

To contact Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Berks Co: (610) 372-4655 ext. 119