



United States Department of Agriculture

Federal and State Financial Assistance Programs and Practices



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Overview

- **Conservation planning**
- **State of Illinois programs**
- **State of Iowa programs**
- **NRCS (Federal) programs**
- **Enrollment process**



Photo credit: Doug Adams

Conservation Planning Process

- 1) Identify resource concerns and opportunities
- 2) Determine goals
- 3) Field visit
- 4) Analyze resources
- 5) Develop options
- 6) Evaluate and discuss options
- 7) Make decisions
- 8) Implement the plan
- 9) Evaluate effectiveness

NRCS NEVADA SERVICE CENTER
Natural Resources Conservation Service
PO BOX 149
NEVADA, IA 50201
(515) 382-2217

AARON J. MUSSELMAN
DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

Conservation Plan

OBJECTIVE(S)
Re enroll CRP-cp21 grass filter strip.

Crop
Tract: 1614

Conservation Crop Rotation
A crop rotation of corn, soybeans will be used on these fields.

Field	Planned Amount	Month	Year	Applied Amount	Date
1	55.5 ac	1	1992	55.5 ac	7/1/1992
1.1	2.9 ac	1	1992	2.9 ac	7/1/1992
2	25.4 ac	1	1992	25.4 ac	7/1/1992
Total:	83.8 ac			83.8 ac	

Contour Farming
Cross-slope farming will be used for all planting and tillage operations.(3% Row Grade)

Field	Planned Amount	Month	Year	Applied Amount	Date
1.1	2.9 ac	1	1995	2.9 ac	7/1/1992
Total:	2.9 ac			2.9 ac	

Grassed Waterway
Shape a natural or constructed channel and establish adapted vegetation for the stable conveyance of runoff water.

Field	Planned Amount	Month	Year	Applied Amount	Date
1	2 ac	1	1995	2 ac	7/1/1992
Total:	2 ac			2 ac	

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Conservation planning example

- 1) Water quality concerns
- 2) Goal: To remove nitrates from the water
- 3) Analyzed resources
- 4) Options
 - a) wetland
 - b) bioreactor
 - c) cover crops



Common conservation practices

Common management practices

- 1) No-till/strip-till
- 2) Cover crops
- 3) Conservation crop rotation
- 4) Nutrient and pest management
- 5) Conservation cover

Common structural practices

- 1) Terraces
- 2) Waterways
- 3) Bioreactors
- 4) Water and sediment control structures
- 5) Constructed wetlands



Program guidelines

- 1) Must have an approved **contract** **PRIOR** to starting a new practice
- 2) Submitting an application is **not** a guarantee that you will be funded
- 3) Eligible practices may vary by location. Please contact your local NRCS/SWCD office prior to starting practice
- 4) USDA employees are not able to promote any programs or services from outside entities
- 5) Financial assistance programs are voluntary



Photo credit: Jason Johnson



USDA Service Center Structure

Illinois USDA Service Centers are divided into three agencies:

- **Farm Service Agency**
 - Keeps track of landownership and administers several Farm Bill programs
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service**
 - Responsible for technical service, practice standards and administers several Farm Bill programs
- **Soil & Water Conservation District**
 - Local units of government that act as grassroots connection between landowners and Federal agencies and administers State funded conservation programs



Programs Supplied thru Partners For Conservation Fund from the Illinois Department of Agriculture

State of Illinois

1) Conservation Practices Program

Structural and management practices

- FY '21 \$2,400,000 across State
- FY '21 \$24,000 for Peoria County
- FY '19 \$20,000
 - 4740 feet of terraces
 - 5050 feet of tile to support terraces

2) Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program

- \$7500 per project depending on number of practices and length of bank treated

3) Fall Cover for Spring Savings Program

- Incentive for planting cover crops

4) State Extension to Federal CREP Contract

- 15 year, 35 year, or Permanent Easement



Financial Assistance program options in Iowa

Federal

- 1) **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
- 2) **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
- 3) **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

State

- 1) **Iowa Financial Incentives Program**
Structural and management practices
- 2) **Water Quality Incentives Program**
Targeted practices including no-till/strip-till, cover crops and N inhibitor use



State financial assistance

Iowa Financial Incentives Program

- Structural and management practices
- 50% cost-share is available on a first-come, first serve basis
- Funded contracts must be completed within 12 months
- Practices must meet NRCS specs and standards

Water Quality Incentive Program

- Est. in 2013 to address the Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- Cover crops
- No-till/strip-till (First time users)
- Use of Nitrification inhibitors (First time users)
- 160 acres maximum



Cover Crop: Crop Insurance Premium Discount

Farmers who seed fall cover crops may be eligible for a \$5 per acre discount on their spring 2022 cash crop insurance premiums.

To qualify, the cover crop acres cannot be enrolled in other state or federal cover crop cost share programs.

- apply.cleanwateriowa.org



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a **voluntary program** that helps producers achieve the compatible goals of agricultural production and environmental quality. Producers may receive **financial and technical assistance** to implement conservation practices that address natural resource concern and opportunities to improve:



Soil



Water



Air



Other Natural
Resource Issues

EQIP Practices:

- Wildlife Habitat
- Pastureland Improvement
- Manure Management
- Soil Health Practices
- Water Quality Practices
- Forestry Management
- Organic Transition
- Structural Practices for Erosion Control



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP is the **largest conservation program in the United States** with 70 million acres of productive agriculture and forestland enrolled. CSP **emphasizes conservation performance**, farmers earn higher payments for higher levels of conservation practices that address natural resource concern and opportunities to improve:



Soil Quality



Soil Erosion



Plant Resources



Animal Resources

Common Iowa CSP practice/enhancement options

- Cover crops
- No-till/Strip-till
- Nutrient management
- Native seedings
- Wildlife habitat



United States Department of Agriculture

CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E340E

CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM

Use of soil health assessment to assist with development of cover crop mix to improve soil health

Conservation Practice 340: Cover Crop

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed)

RESOURCE CONCERN: Soil

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 Year

Enhancement Description

Soil health assessment (year 1) to evaluate current crop rotation in addressing soil organic matter depletion. Results are utilized to select a multi-species cover crop mix to add to the current crop rotation. Follow up assessment completed (year 3).

Applying for Conservation Programs

- Program Incentives **Reduce Risk** during the learning curve
- NRCS/SWCD will help eligible producers **develop a conservation plan**, which will become the basis of the program application.
- Applications are taken on a **continuous sign-up** process with cutoff dates periodically established.
- **Applications are ranked** based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal.



Getting started with NRCS/SWCD

Conservation Planning process

- 1) **What are their resource concerns?**
- 2) **Practices selected; anticipated timeline**
- 3) **Cost-share program selection**
 - 1) Which program will benefit the producer most?
 - 2) Producers are unable to receive financial assistance from multiple programs for the same practice in the same location...no double dipping



Photo credit: Jason Johnson



Getting started with USDA

Program Enrollment Process

If not already in the USDA Farm system, they start with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to complete basic paperwork

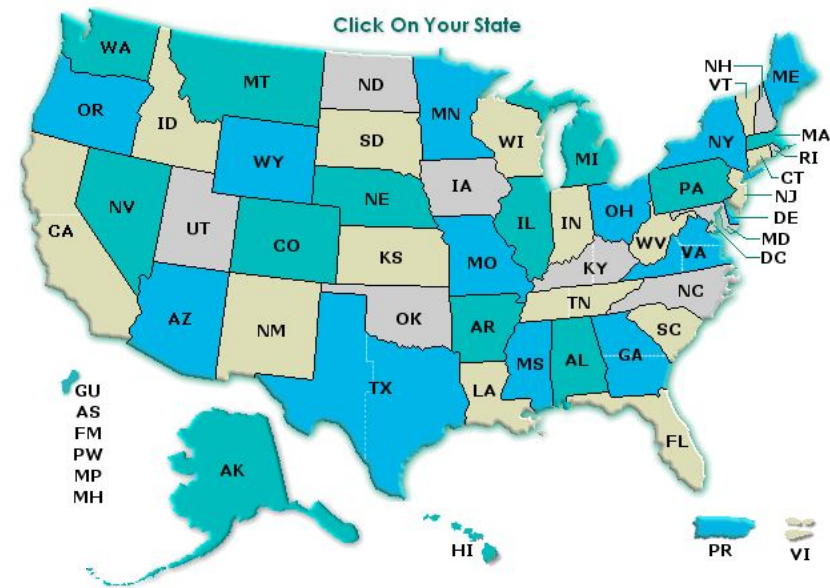
If farm is not currently in the system, they will need to provide a deed

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and other basic eligibility requirements must be met

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>



USDA Service Centers are designed to be a single location where customers can access the services provided by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Rural Development agencies. This web site will provide the address of a USDA Service Center and other Agency offices serving your area along with information on how to contact them.



Summary

- 1) Everything begins with the conservation planning process
- 2) Multiple practices and programs are available
- 3) Contact local USDA-NRCS/SWCD to find out more
<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>



🕒 USDA service center



A close-up photograph of dark, rich brown soil with green grass and some small white flowers growing from it. The soil is in the foreground, and the plants are in the background.

Questions?

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