

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
July 11, 2019
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



Deadline Extended to Apply for Funding to Plant Cover Crops on Flooded Cropland Acres

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering a special Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign-up for farmers in Nebraska who could not plant their crops because of flooded or wet fields. This sign-up provides technical and financial assistance to help farmers plant cover crops, an alternative to letting fields go fallow and uncovered. The deadline to apply has been extended to July 19, 2019.

Excessive moisture and flooding in 2019 have prevented or delayed planting on many farms across Nebraska. Many producers are unable to plant crops by a final planting date or have experienced significant delays in planting.

Fields that are saturated for an extended period can lose important soil organisms. Cover crop roots add organic matter and create pathways for air and water to move through the soil, which is key to restoring its health. Cover crops help farmers manage soil erosion, weeds, and pests and improve soil health. They can also help soil health recover after a flood or a long period of remaining wet. Cover crops also improve soil's physical and biological properties, supply nutrients, improve the availability of soil water, and break pest cycles along with various other benefits.

Work currently being done to maintain conservation structures as well as sediment removal, debris removal or grading and reshaping can be stabilized and protected from further erosion and damage by planting a cover crop.

For more information, or to apply for this special EQIP funding, contact your [local NRCS office](#).

Other USDA Programs

Farmers with prevented planting coverage through USDA-administered crop insurance can hay, graze, or chop a cover crop. USDA's Risk Management Agency [adjusted the final haying and grazing date from Nov. 1 to Sept. 1](#) to help farmers who were prevented from planting or delayed in planting due to flooding and excessive rainfall.

USDA Offers Producers Options to Re-enroll or Extend Expiring CRP Contracts

Farmers and ranchers with expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts may now re-enroll in certain CRP continuous signup practices or, if eligible, select a one-year contract extension. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) also is accepting offers from those who want to enroll for the first time in one of the country's largest conservation programs. FSA's 52nd signup for CRP runs from June 3 to August 23.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized the CRP program this past December. This year's CRP continuous signup includes such practices as grass waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. [View a full list of practices approved for this signup](#). Continuous signup enrollment contracts last for 10 to 15 years. Soil rental rates are set at 90 percent of 2018 rates. Incentive payments are not offered for these practices.

Producers with Expiring CRP Contracts

A one-year extension is being offered to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less that have practices not eligible for re-enrollment under this CRP signup.

Alternatively, producers with expiring contracts may have the option to enroll in the Transition Incentives Program, which provides two additional annual rental payments on the condition the land is sold or rented to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

CRP Continuous CREP Signup

This signup also enables producers to sign up under existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) agreements. CREP is part of CRP and targets high-priority conservation concerns identified by a state, and federal funds are supplemented with non-federal funds to address those concerns.

Other Future CRP Signup Options

FSA is still planning a CRP general signup in December 2019, with a CRP Grasslands signup to follow. Those that extend their contracts may be eligible for one of these signup types or another continuous signup in the future.

More Information

Producers interested in applying for CRP continuous practices, including those under existing CREP agreements, or who want to extend their contract, should contact their USDA service center by August 23.

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