



Conservation

Family farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists. For centuries, they've been taking action to leave the land in a better state than they found it. Farmers care about the overall well-being of the environment, and their livelihoods depend on it - healthy soil, water, air, and wildlife and reliable weather patterns are essential for food production. But they can't accomplish conservation goals on their own, as they often lack the financial, material, and educational resources to do so. Farmers need the expertise and support of researchers and extension specialists as well as local and federal agencies.

The Farm Bill's conservation title programs provide farmers with technical and financial assistance to implement practices that conserve natural resources; protect wildlife; improve soil, water, and air quality; and enhance on-farm sustainability. These objectives have always been important, but as the climate continues to change and extreme weather events become more common, they are increasingly critical. Through better management, farmland soils have the potential to sequester as much carbon as the U.S. emits. Not only does this process take harmful greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere, but it makes soils healthier and more fertile, boosting farmers' and ranchers' resilience to climate change.

But these programs aren't just about the environment - they can help keep farmers in business, too. By rewarding farmers for achieving conservation benefits, conservation programs can diversify and stabilize farm income. This, in turn, can increase farmers' resistance to economic uncertainties, keeping them on the land for generations to come.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a voluntary cost-share program that encourages producers to improve soil, water, wildlife, air, and related natural resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers for the implementation of conservation practices that address certain natural resources concerns on their land. EQIP payments offset the costs of both structural and management practices. Contracts can last up to ten years.



38,726
new
contracts



10.6 million
new acres
FY 2017 Obligations



\$1.13
billion



2018 Farm Bill Conservation

Conservation Stewardship Program

CSP awards producers performance incentive payments to maintain existing conservation practices on their operations and to implement additional practices. Applications are ranked based on previous conservation achievements and the extent to which future projects address local and national resource priorities. Contracts last five years, and can be renewed if the initial contract is successfully fulfilled and additional conservation objectives exist.



12,000+
new/renewed
contracts



16.5 million
new/renewed
acres

FY 2017 Obligations



\$1.55
billion

Conservation Reserve Program

CRP awards producers rental payments for taking environmentally sensitive land out of production. Participants must meet management requirements to ensure the reserved land achieves conservation benefits. Contracts last between 10-15 years, at which point a producer can either re-enroll or put the land back into production.



638,720
total
contracts



24 million
total acres

FY 2017 Obligations



\$1.90
billion

Conservation in the Farm Bill

We need strong conservation programs that ensure farmers and ranchers are able to conserve, manage, and enhance natural resources while increasing the productivity and sustainability of their operations. Congress can do this if they:

- ✓ **Increase acreage** under CRP.
- ✓ **Maintain funding** for working lands conservation programs that promote active stewardship and locally-led conservation activities.
- ✓ **Renew and fully fund** programs that include climate mitigation research and technical assistance at national and local levels.