



# NEWS RELEASE



## Flooded Fields Again This Year? Think About CREP

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MADISON – Wisconsin farmers whose fields flooded earlier this spring and summer should take a look at the Conservation Reserve Enhancement program, state and federal agriculture officials say.

CREP pays landowners to install conservation practices along waterways or return continually flooded fields to wetlands, while leaving the rest of the adjacent land in agricultural production. The amount of land put into CREP varies, and there is no minimum acreage. Landowners may enroll land under either a 15-year agreement or a perpetual easement. The program is a joint state-federal effort.

For farmers who suffered crop damage and financial losses due to this year's flooding, enrolling in CREP can help recoup some of those losses with upfront payments. CREP can also be part of long-term business planning, allowing farmers to manage known risk.

"This year's flooding has shown where farmers could benefit from CREP," said Ben Brancel, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. "Many of these lands flood repeatedly, so producers might want to consider an option that would reduce the risk of flooding and still provide them with some financial return."

"Farmland and water are among our most precious resources," said Brad Pfaff, executive director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency in Wisconsin. "CREP benefits all Wisconsin citizens by reducing runoff, preventing erosion, and improving both surface and groundwater quality."

Lands in 50 Wisconsin counties are eligible for CREP enrollment, based on their 2002 - 2007 cropping or pasturing history and distances to ditches, streams, lakes or wetlands. Sign-up is on a first-come, first-served basis. To find out if land is eligible, to enroll, or to get more information, contact the nearest [FSA office](#), [county land conservation office](#), or DATCP. Eligibility maps and contact information are available at [http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Conservation/CREP/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/CREP/index.aspx).

Payments to program participants have averaged \$2,000 per acre for 15-year contracts, and \$2,850 per acre for perpetual easements during the agreement timeframe. There are four types of payments:

- **Annual payments** for up to 15 years, typically ranging from \$20 to \$228 per acre based on the soil types of the area
- **State incentive payments**, made soon after the agreement is signed, based on the annual rental rate and averaging \$150 per acre for 15-year contracts and \$1,000 per acre for perpetual easements.
- **Federal incentive payments**, also made soon after signing, of \$100 per acre for lands in riparian buffers, filter strips or grassed waterway practices
- **Practice payments** to share the costs of installing conservation practices, with federal funds paying up to 50 percent of the cost and state funds paying up to 20 percent

Commonly installed practices include filter strips, riparian buffers, and wetland restoration. Filter strips are grasslands between crops and water. Riparian buffers are planted to trees and shrubs on land between crops and water. Wetland restorations return wetland ecosystems to sites smaller than 40 acres, often by breaking drainage tiles and planting vegetation that tolerates wet soils. All of these practices reduce flooding impact by stopping water and allowing it to seep into the soil and subsoil, filtering water before it enters streams. In turn, habitat improves for fish and other aquatic life. ###