

## Farm Bill 2014 How can it help you?

If you own or manage farmland or forestland in Pennsylvania, then the 5-year 2014 Farm Bill programs can help you implement conservation practices included in your operation's conservation plan to address natural resource concerns.

Conservation programs help to reduce erosion, improve soil quality, protect water bodies, restore and establish fish and wildlife habitat, improve air quality, and conserve energy.

This guide introduces the assistance available to help you implement your conservation plan. Sign-up is continuous for all conservation programs and participation is voluntary.



## Financial Incentives

NRCS offers a variety of financial incentives to farmers, private landowners, and forestland owners interested in conservation programs. Some programs offer annual payments for conservation measures, others offer one-time, up-front payments for long-term easements, and most include federal funds to share the costs of installing conservation practices.

## Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is also provided to help plan and implement conservation practices on private lands on a voluntary basis. The 2014 Farm Bill continues to provide funding for Technical Service Providers listed on the NRCS TSP online registry TechReg, who may also provide conservation technical assistance. Local USDA NRCS service centers can provide additional information.

## NRCS and Conservation Districts: Partners in Conservation

NRCS works with many partners to deliver conservation services and programs. Local conservation districts, Penn State extension offices, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, state agencies, and many other private conservation organizations play an important role in Pennsylvania's conservation effort. Professionals in each organization can provide technical assistance and may offer additional financial incentives.

## Opportunities for Veterans, Beginning, Limited Resource and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

The 2014 Farm Bill continues to address the unique circumstances and concerns of beginning farmers (individuals farming fewer than 10 consecutive years), farmers with limited resources, and socially disadvantaged farmers (those belonging to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice).

The 2014 Farm Bill now includes a preference for beginning farmers who are also veterans. Incentives include up to 90 percent of the cost

of practice implementation as well as advance payment opportunities. Special funding pools are available for beginning, limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers in several NRCS conservation programs.

## How to Get Started

To begin working with NRCS, visit your local USDA NRCS service center or conservation district. NRCS is listed in your phone book's federal government section under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. You can also find local field offices online at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

An NRCS professional will work with you to develop a conservation plan that will address your conservation goals and environmental concerns on your farm and help you determine which programs and practices best fit your needs.

## For More Information

Contact your local USDA NRCS Service Center or Conservation District for assistance. Information on conservation programs and practices can also be found online at [www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov).



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## Natural Resources Conservation Service

# 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Programs and Practices for Pennsylvania Producers

[www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov)

Program	Description	Who is eligible? What land is eligible?	Length and type of agreement	Financial incentives provided by USDA	Participant obligations	Common Practices
<b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Agricultural Land Easement</b>	ACEP works in partnership with eligible entities to protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. (Formerly FRPP and GRP)	State and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs.	Permanent easement	NRCS contributes up to 50 percent of the easement purchase based on appraised fair market value; up to 75 percent is available for grasslands of environmental significance.	Maintain agricultural or grassland use.	Improved Grazing Techniques, Advanced IPM, Pasture and Hay land Planting, Fencing, Watering Facility, Animal Trails and Walkways, Forest Harvest Management, Continuous No-Till (Note: NRCS does not fund conservation practices under this program.)
<b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Wetlands Reserve Easement</b>	ACEP provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through easements. (Formerly WRP)	Private landowners of land determined eligible by NRCS for wetland restoration. Applicants must have owned the land for at least 24 months.	Permanent and 30-year easement options	NRCS pays 50 to 100 percent of the easement value. NRCS pays all costs associated with closing the easement.	Maintain and restore wetlands in partnership with NRCS.	Wetland Restoration, Wetland Enhancement, Conservation Cover, Tree Planting
<b>Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)</b>	AMA reduces the risk associated with producing agricultural products by helping producers diversify their crops and livestock and implement conservation practices.	Producers who own or operate an ag operation. Lands include privately-owned cropland, pastureland or public land under private control during the contract.	Up to a 10-year contract	Participants cannot receive more than \$50,000 in AMA program payments per fiscal year. Historically underserved groups may receive a higher payment rate.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.	Irrigation
<b>Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)</b>	CRP and CREP are land set-aside programs, aimed at reducing erosion, increasing wildlife habitat, improving water quality and enhancing forestland.	Owners/operators of eligible cropland owned for 12 months. Cropland must meet cropping history requirements and be physically and legally capable of being planted with an agricultural commodity.	10-15 years	An annual rental payment and a percentage of the cost to establish the practice.  <i>*Note: The Farm Service Agency manages CRP/CREP; NRCS provides technical assistance.</i>	Establish, maintain and manage practice(s) per the conservation plan.	Riparian Buffers, Streambank Fencing, Stream Crossings
<b>Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)</b>	CSP rewards farmers who are good conservation stewards of their land and offers compensation for agreeing to install additional enhancements on enrolled acres.	Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland with existing conservation practices.	5-year contract with possible renewal	Annual payments for maintaining existing conservation practices and compensation for implementing additional enhancement activities.  Separate funding pools for beginning, limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers.	Maintain and increase level of current land stewardship.	Enhancements - Incorporating Manure, Cover Crop Mixes, Hardwood Crop Tree Release, Other Advanced Management Activities
<b>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)</b>	EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.	Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland, pastureland or non-industrial forestland.	2 - 10 year contract	Compensation for the cost of implementing conservation practices.  Beginning, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers may be eligible for higher payment rates.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.	Animal Waste Storage Facilities, Grazing Systems, Conservation Tillage, Nutrient Management, Erosion Control, Water Quality Practices, Forest Management Practices, Pest Management, Wildlife Habitat, and Streambank Fencing