

Dan Steinkruger, State Executive Director for the Nebraska Farm Service Agency (FSA), announced that a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup is underway now through April 6. This is the third consecutive year that USDA has offered a general CRP signup.

“Financial incentives available through CRP afford farmers and ranchers a low risk opportunity to implement a variety of conservation practices that will benefit the environment in a number of ways,” said Steinkruger. “It is USDA’s goal to ensure that we use CRP to address our most critical resource issues. CRP is an important program for protecting our most environmentally sensitive lands from erosion and sedimentation, and for ensuring the sustainability of our groundwater, lakes, rivers, ponds and streams.”

Landowners enrolled in the CRP program receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP can be offered during sign-up if all eligibility requirements are met. CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall can make new contract offers during the signup period. Contracts awarded during this general signup will become effective

Oct. 1.

All CRP offers are evaluated and ranked using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that indicates the environmental benefits of enrolling land in CRP.

There are five environmental factors that make up the EBI: wildlife, water, soil, air, enduring benefits and cost. Decisions will be made following the end of the sign-up period and after analyzing EBI data on all of the offers.

In addition to the general sign-up, the continuous CRP sign-up program will be ongoing. For more information, contact the local FSA Office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.