

Conservation Program Options

Stop into the office to visit about these programs or give us a call at 701-883-5344 ext. 3 (NRCS) or 701-883-5344 ext. 2 for FSA or contact the person listed.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): NRCS- Sign up ends September 20th, 2024.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the best program for practices such as windbreak renovations, no till, cover crops, grass seedings, grassed waterways or seasonal high tunnels. If you have livestock, some common conservation practices are pipelines, tanks, wells, cross fences, and a prescribed grazing plan.

- Sign-up for 2025 is open now. Cost share is paid as a flat rate per acre or per foot depending on practice.
- 3 to 5 years of payments depending on practice
- Based on points system – not everyone is accepted, prices based on practices picked
- A few different state initiatives available are Forestry and Beginning Farmer/Socially Disadvantaged Farmer.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- MIGRATORY BIRD RESURGENCE INITIATIVE (MBRI): NRCS- Sign up ended but we can take an application at any time.

The Migratory Bird Resurgence Initiative program emerged from a North Dakota concept called the Working Wetlands program. Farmers and conservation leaders worked together to find a new approach to conserve small wetlands in working cropland. 2 acres or less wetlands are eligible and prices per acre range between \$177.28 and \$241.74, depending on the management selected. If the wetland has any easement on it, then it is not eligible.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- ACT NOW: NRCS Although EQIP applications are accepted year-round, applications received after original EQIP batching date 9/20/2024, will be ranked, preapproved, and obligated according to a timeline.

The difference will be immediate approval and obligation once an application is ranked and meets the eligibility and ranking score minimum. Applications will be processed in the order they are received with a cutoff date.

Fund Pools Eligible for ACT NOW include Animal Feeding Operation (AFO), Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, Energy, EQIP-CIC, Forestry, High Tunnel/Small Farm, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA-EQIP), Irrigation, Local Work Group & Tribal LWG, Migratory Bird Resurgence Initiative (MBRI), National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), Organic, and Wildlife.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)- Classic: NRCS- Sign up ended but we can take an application at any time.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a comprehensive working lands conservation program designed to help farmers and ranchers protect and improve natural resources on productive and profitable farms. Through CSP, farmers and ranchers receive technical and financial assistance to actively manage and maintain current conservation systems and to implement additional conservation activities on incentive payments for installing these practices on your land. land in agricultural production. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and hayland. This program is for operators only and is a five-year program.

- The variety of CSP practices that are offered give you a lot of freedom to select enhancements that help you meet your management goals. These improvements work naturally with your land to bring out your land's best potential.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to be implemented through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): NRCS- Call for Sign-up deadline.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 will provide assistance to agricultural and forestland producers to invest in climate and clean energy solutions and promote climate-related benefits through Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. The difference will be immediate approval and obligation once an application is ranked and meets the eligibility and ranking score minimum. This program is for operators only and is a five-year program. Pro: No longer having to wait a year for funding; Con: Only certain climate smart practices are available.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to be implemented through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)-Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE): NRCS- Sign up to be announced soon.

The Wetland Reserve Easement Program's purpose is to restore, protect and enhance wetlands. Each easement is required to have an agricultural land easement plan that promotes the long-term viability of the land. The landowner continues to control hunting access & pay taxes on that land. **These are 30-year easements where a landowner receives roughly 75% of the appraised land value plus 75% of restoration costs.** Grazing and haying may be an option over the 30 years with a Compatible Use Authorization Plan (CUA). One upfront payment for the easement (this can take up to 2 years to be paid) and then cost share payments are paid when practices are completed. Must own the land for at least two years and turn in the deed with the application for the land being offered. This program is for big wetlands (not designated lakes) and must be less than six feet deep.

- 2024 rates in LaMoure County: Cropland: \$2,632.50/ac. and Non-Cropland (Range, etc.): \$1,282.50/ac.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): FSA

CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill). FSA administers CRP, while other USDA agencies, such as NRCS, and partners provide technical support. CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. **Call FSA if you are interested in CRP.**

- 62nd Continuous CRP Sign-up ended (4-4-24 to 4-29-24).
- Land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2012 to 2017 and is physically and legally capable of being planted.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)- Grasslands: FSA- [sign-up at FSA.](#)

USDA Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Grasslands Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers to help landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations and plant and animal biodiversity, under the greatest threat of conversion. Working lands conservation programs help ranchers to enhance the sustainability of their operations while keeping land in production. FSA administers Grasslands CRP while technical support functions are provided by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). FSA provides CRP participants with annual rental payments and cost share assistance. In return for conserving the grazing lands according to an NRCS developed Conservation Plan. FSA bases rental rates on 75 percent of the cash rent data provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) plus a climate-smart practice incentive. **Nationally, the minimum rental rate is \$13 per acre. LaMoure County is at \$28/ac. and Dickey County is at \$34/ac. Call FSA if you are interested in this program.**

Program Options through other Conservation Partners

Pheasants Forever- Hannah Peterson-701-663-4817;
hpeterson@pheasantsforever.org

- Does NOT require hunting access
- Possible Cost share for perennial cover, cover crops, and pollinators
- Possible land rental payment for cover
- Free consultation, habitat recommendations, and profitability analysis

Meadowlark Initiative: Heather Husband, Coordinator- 701-223-8501 (office),
701-537-3348 (cell) or heather@naturalresourcestrust.com

- Project to improve, increase and connect wildlife habitat and support the sustainability of new and existing livestock ranchers. Practices include, but are not limited to, grass plantings, livestock water, prescribed grazing, and cross fences. Contact Heather for this program.

USFWS- Chris Flann: 701-752-4218 ext. 3 (w); 701-650-1220 (cell)

- Program & Cost Share Options possibly available.
- Don't have to allow access to hunting.

NDGF- Renae Schultz- PLOTS program: 701-320-4695 (cell)

- Program options & Cost Share may be available on grass plantings.

Tree Plantings- LaMoure County Soil Conservation District (SCD)- Susan Muske: 701-883-5344 ext. 3; 701-320-8724 (Susan's cell) or
susan.muske@nd.nacdnet.net

- Possible funding opportunities available for tree plantings and windbreak renovations. Give Susan Muske or Ellie Lux a call.

Ducks Unlimited: William Palarski- wpalarski@ducks.org

- Cover crop and livestock integration project cost share.

Ducks Unlimited: Sam Krohn- 701-355-3577 (office), 701-934-1635 (cell) or
skrohn@ducks.org

- Grassland Restorations and Grazing Infrastructure Program
 - Practices such as, but not all inclusive, Herbaceous Weed Control, Hay/Pasture Planting, Range Planting, Fencing (cross and boundary), water well, livestock pipeline, and livestock tanks.
 - Rental Payment for grass-establishment (3 years)
 - 10-year agreement