

## 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

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the best program for practices such as windbreak renovations, no till, conservation crop rotation, 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 2024 has not been announced yet but you can fill out an application at any time. **This program is one year out, sign-up for potential cost share would be in 2024.** Cost share is paid as a flat rate per acre or per foot depending on practice.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- MIGRATORY BIRD RESURGENCE INITIATIVE (MBRI): NRCS- Sign up from February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (or until funds are expended).

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 that one is not eligible. Prices have increased \$58 since last sign-up!

### Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to be implemented through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): NRCS- Sign-up from February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, through June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (or until funds are expended).

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. Con: only certain climate smart practices are available; Pro: no longer having to wait a year for funding!!

### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)- Classic: NRCS- Sign up deadline is April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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 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.
  - Once you choose the enhancements that best fit your operation, CSP offers annual incentive payments for installing these practices on your land.

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 **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds to be implemented through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)-Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE): NRCS- Sign up deadline is March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

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. This WRE program will be funded under IRA for a total of \$1.4 Billion over the next four years. Must own the land for at least two years and have the deed available for the land being offered. This program is for big wetlands (not designated lakes) and must be less than six feet deep.

- 2022 rates in LaMoure County: Cropland: \$2,3700/ac. and Non-Cropland (Range, etc.): \$1,132.50/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.**

## Conservation Reserve Program- General- CRP: FSA

**USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct a general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup from Feb. 27, 2023, through April 7, 2023. FSA will accept general CRP offers only during the signup period.** CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so 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 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. Accepted contracts for this general CRP signup period will become effective Oct. 1, 2023.

Land not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered during this general CRP signup period. In addition, CRP producers whose CRP contracts are expiring on Sept. 30, 2023, may offer the expiring land in general CRP signup 60. To be eligible for general CRP, land must be cropland (including field margins) planted, or considered planted, to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2012 to 2017 and be physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal GENERAL SIGNUP 60 ENROLLMENT PERIOD. Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may also be eligible. In 2021, FSA introduced higher payment rates, new incentives, and more targeted focus on CRP’s role in climate change mitigation.

To submit general CRP offers, producers must contact the local FSA office at 701-883-5344 Ext. 2.

## Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)- Grasslands: 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, plant and animal biodiversity, and eligible land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. The Grasslands CRP program is a working lands program. Working lands conservation programs help farmers 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 \$15 per acre. LaMoure County has been at \$24/ac. Call FSA if you are interested in this program.**

## Program Options through other Conservation Partners

**Pheasants Forever- Austin Lang: 701-840-3062 (cell); 701-763-6110 (h)**

- 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](mailto: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](mailto:susan.muske@nd.nacdnet.net)**

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

**Red River Valley Prairie Management Toolbox: Julianna Bosmoe (1-605-290-2571 or [julianna.bosmoe@audubon.org](mailto:julianna.bosmoe@audubon.org)**

- Cost share available for establishing rotation grazing systems, invasive woody species removal (Russian olive and Siberian Elm) and rejuvenation of pollinators through native wildflower plantings.

**Ducks Unlimited: William Palarski- [wpalarski@ducks.org](mailto: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](mailto:skrohn@ducks.org)- Sign up from March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.**

- 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