



The 2014 Farm Bill consolidates and streamlines key conservation programs offered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), while investing about \$18.7 billion in conservation over the next five years. The Bill also provides about \$3.4 billion for fiscal 2014 for NRCS-administered programs.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP), and the Healthy Reserve Program from the 2008 Farm Bill; and repealed the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). The 2014 Farm Bill also authorized three new programs: 1) The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), 2) The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), and 3) The Voluntary Public Access and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, which is transferred to NRCS from FSA.

Key changes are as follows:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - Incorporates the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and requires that at least 5% of the funds go to practices benefitting wildlife
 - 60% of funds should address livestock resource concerns
 - Contracts that were enrolled under the 2008 Farm Bill are rolled over are not affected by the 2014 Farm Bill
 - Payment limit is raised from \$300,000 to \$450,000
 - AGI eligibility is reduced to \$900,000 for all income
 - Authorized funding:
 - FY 2014 - \$1.3b
 - FY 2015 - \$1.6b
 - FY 2016 - \$1.65b
 - FY 2017 - \$1.65b
 - FY 2018 - \$1.75b

- **Conservation Stewardship Program**
 - Enrollment cap reduced to 10 million acres annually
 - Allows expiring contracts to be renewed
 - Eliminates the 10% cap for forest land
 - Increases locally identified priority resource concerns to at least 5
 - Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) removed



- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) (new program)**
 - Consolidates the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP) and Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP)
 - Includes a wetland reserve component and an agricultural land component
 - Funding for WRP and GRP expired September 30, 2013; but is reinstated under ACEP
 - Authorized funding:
 - FY 2014 - \$400m
 - FY 2015 - \$425m
 - FY 2016 - \$450m
 - FY 2017 - \$500m
 - FY 2018 - \$250m

- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) (new program)**
 - Combines and replaces the purposes and functions of the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program (CBWP), Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), and Great Lakes Basin Program for Erosion and Sediment Control
 - Furthers the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soil, water, and wildlife on a regional scale
 - Encourages conservation partners to cooperate with producers
 - Provides assistance through:
 - Partnership agreements
 - Program contracts or easement agreements
 - Project selections will be competitive via Request for Proposal (RFP)
 - Agreements can be up to 5 years
 - Partnership agreements require funding and summary assessment upon completion
 - Funding cannot be used for administrative support
 - Allows for a total of 8 critical conservation areas (designated by Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack)
 - Allows for state and multi-state level projects

The new Farm Bill is great for America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners. It consolidates and streamlines programs from the 2008 Farm Bill, and it expands the conservation opportunities.

To learn more about the technical and financial assistance available from NRCS, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or your [local USDA service center](#).

For more on the 2014 Farm Bill, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill.