

Which programs apply to me?

The programs that apply to you depend on what type of conservation activities you are interested in doing on your property. With all of the different acronyms used, the Farm Bill programs can start to seem like an alphabet soup.

Farm Bill Programs Chart

	Farm Bill Program	Description	Types of Activities	Agency	States Eligible
Working Lands Conservation	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	Financial and technical assistance incentives to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals; optimize environmental benefits; and help farmers and ranchers meet environmental regulations	State Conservationist identifies priority resource concerns with advice of State Technical Committee	NRCS	All
	Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)	Assistance to develop and improve wildlife habitat, including threatened and endangered species; can focus program on special areas, habitats, or species	State Conservationist identifies priority resource concerns with advice from the State Technical Committee	NRCS	All
	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Encourages producers to undertake additional conservation activities or improve, maintain, and manage existing conservation activities	State Conservationist will rank and select applications (activities) based on national, state, and local criteria.	NRCS	All
Wood Energy	Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)	Assistance for establishment, production, harvest, storage and transport of renewable biomass	Establishment, production, harvest, storage, or transport of renewable biomass	FSA	Requires establishment of BCAP project areas by the Secretary of Agriculture
Emergency Programs	Emergency Forest Restoration Program	Available to NIPF owners to restore landscapes damaged by fire, drought, flood and other natural disasters; Funding subject to appropriation	Payments for emergency measures to NIPF landowners to restore landscapes damaged by fire, drought, flood, and other natural disasters	FSA	All, where there is a natural disaster that has damaged NIPF land, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture

You can work with the USDA or your state forestry agency to find the right program for you. If you have not applied before or have been overwhelmed by the process or the array of programs available, then this information should help.

Forestland Eligible	Length of Agreement	Easements	Payments	Forest Landowner's Obligations
Nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land	More than 1 year, less than 10 years	N/A	Up to 75% of the cost of the conservation practice or 100% of estimate income forgone by producer to implement particular conservation practices; no more than \$300,000 over six years	Develop and implement a forest management plan; assist with cost and establishment of conservation practices
NIPF and tribal land; government land not eligible	More than 1 year, less than 10 years	N/A	Up to 75% of wildlife habitat development practices	Develop and implement a forest management plan that includes the development of wildlife habitat; assist with installation costs
Meet "stewardship threshold" for at least one resource concern and address one additional priority resource concern; up to 10% of enrolled acreage may be in NIPF land	5 years	N/A	May not exceed \$200,000 for all contracts entered into during a five-year period	Develop and implement a forest management plan that includes installing or maintaining conservation practices
NIPF land eligible with a forest stewardship plan; producer contracts with USDA	15 years	N/A	Up to 75% of the cost of site preparation and tree planting	Compliance with highly erodible land and wetlands requirements; forest stewardship plan; site preparation or tree planting
NIPF land; tree cover must have been on the land immediately before the natural disaster	N/A	N/A	Up to 75% of the cost of the emergency measures	25% cost share; carry out emergency measures

Farm Bill Programs Chart (cont.)

	Farm Bill Program	Description	Types of Activities	Agency	States Eligible
Conservation Easement/ Reserve	Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)	Restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems for threatened/endangered species, biodiversity, or carbon sequestration; State Conservationist submits proposals to the Chief of NRCS for funding selection	Conservation Easements, protection, enhancement, maintenance, and management of habitat and forest ecosystem functions and values	NRCS	AK, ME, MN, MS, GA, IN, OK, OR
	Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	Opportunity to receive financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture	Restore, improve, and protect wetland functions and values	NRCS	All
	Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)	Help farmers and ranchers preserve their agricultural land; provide matching funds to state, tribal, and local governments and NGOs to purchase conservation easements	State Conservationist identifies priority resource concerns with advice of State Technical Committee	NRCS	All
	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	Helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally sensitive land; CRP is for conversion of marginal cropland to long-term conservation cover, either grass or trees	Includes, but not limited to, tree planting, permanent wildlife habitat establishment, and wetland restoration; management activities can include tree thinning	FSA	All
	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	Special initiative within CRP to address agricultural resource problems; targeting priority environmental needs and providing additional incentives for conservation; voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water	Filter strips and forested buffers; develop and restore wetlands	FSA	All, though since it is a partnership between tribal, federal, state governments, and sometimes private groups and they identify an agriculture-related issue, this can determine the specific geographic areas and practices
	Forest Legacy Program	Grants to states to protect important forest areas	A nationally competitive federal program in partnership with states to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands; entirely volunteer; designed to encourage protection of privately owned forestlands	USFS	All

Forestland Eligible	Length of Agreement	Easements	Payments	Forest Landowner's Obligations
All private forestlands that have an HFRP restoration plan	Permanent or 30-year easements; 30-year contracts (tribal lands only); restoration cost-share agreements	Permanent or 30 years	10-year contracts: 50% of the average costs; 30-year easement/contracts: may receive 75% of market value of enrolled land; permanent easements: may receive up to 100% of market value of enrolled land	For easements, the owner shall cooperate in the restoration, protection, enhancement, maintenance, and management of the land in accordance with the easement or contract
Includes floodplain forest; must have owned land for more than seven years; government land is not eligible; wetland must be restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits	Permanent or 30-year easements, 30-year contracts (tribal lands only), restoration cost share agreements	Permanent or 30 years	Permanent: up to 100% of the cost of acquisition and restoration; 30-year easements: up to 75% of the cost of acquisition and restoration; up to 75% of restoration and contract payment equal to 30-year easement acquisition cost; restoration cost-share agreement: up 75% of restoration cost	Develop and implement a wetland restoration plan that includes the restoration and maintenance of wetlands that will include management of forestland; if necessary, assist with the cost of restoration
NIPF land eligible if it contributes to economic viability of agricultural operation or serves as buffer to protect an agricultural operation from development; forest management plan required if forestland is 10+ acres or 10% of area; easement areas must be less than 2/3 forestland	Permanent	Permanent	NRCS may provide up to 50% of the fair market value of the conservation easement	Develop and implement a forest management plan and comply with terms of the easement
Eligible land is agricultural land meeting cropland definitions, including having been cropped four out of the six years previous to the passage of the Farm Bill	10-15 years	N/A	50% cost share	Develop and implement a forest management plan for the conversion of cropland to a less-intensive use; also assist with the cost, establishment, and maintenance of conservation practices
Mainly riparian buffers and wetland restoration	10-15 years	N/A	Federal annual rental rate plus cost share of up to 50% of the eligible cost to install the practice	Develop and implement a forest management plan for the conversion of cropland to a less-intensive use; assist with the cost, establishment, and maintenance of conservation practices
Private forestland within a state-defined Forest Legacy Area	Permanent	Yes, fee simple purchases also allowed	Federal government may fund up to 75% of project costs, with at least 25% coming from private, state, or local sources	To qualify, landowners prepare a multiple resource management plan as part of the conservation easement acquisition