

## Conservation Provisions Overview

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May 2002

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) represents the single most significant commitment of resources toward conservation on private lands in the Nation's history. The legislation responds to a broad range of emerging natural resource challenges faced by farmers and ranchers, including soil erosion, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmland protection. Private landowners will benefit from a portfolio of voluntary assistance, including cost-share, land rental, incentive payments, and technical assistance. The 2002 Farm Bill places a strong emphasis on the conservation of working lands, ensuring that land remain both healthy and productive.

The conservation provisions build upon past conservation gains and respond to the call of farmers and ranchers across the country for additional cost-share resources. The 2002 Farm Bill also ensures greater access to the programs by making more farmers and ranchers eligible for participation.

### ***Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA)***

- Provides additional funding for AMA, in addition to funds provided through the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000

### ***Conservation Corridor Program***

- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a conservation corridor demonstration program on the Delmarva Peninsula in the states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia located on the east side of the Chesapeake Bay

### ***Conservation of Private Grazing Land (CPGL)***

- Provides policy for technical assistance relating to conservation on private grazing lands, and mandates establishment of a separate funding line-item for this purpose

### ***Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007
- Raises authorization for enrollment to an overall acreage cap of 39.2 million acres
- Expands the Farmable Wetland Pilot Program to become available Nationwide with an aggregate acreage cap of 1 million acres
- Allows landowners to continue with existing ground cover where practicable and consistent with wildlife reserve benefits of CRP
- Provides for managed haying (including for biomass) and grazing

### ***Conservation Security Program (CSP)***

- Establishes CSP for fiscal years 2003 through 2007 to reward stewardship and provide an incentive for addressing additional resource concerns on agricultural working lands

### ***Desert Terminal Lakes***

- Provides \$200 million in funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to be transferred to the Secretary of the Interior to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes; prohibits the purchase or lease of water rights with the funds

### ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007 with greater funding resources
- Eliminates geographic priority areas
- Allows for expenditure of funds in the first year of the contract
- Eliminates the cap on large confined livestock operations
- Provides an overall payment limitation of \$450,000 per producer, regardless of the number of farms or contracts, over the authorized life of the 2002 Farm Bill
- Specifies contract length, from a minimum of one year beyond completion of the project to a maximum of 10 years
- Prohibits the process of bidding-down (competitive cost share reduction among program applicants)
- Allows up to 90 percent cost-share for beginning or limited resource farmers and ranchers
- Allows the Secretary of Agriculture to use a portion of EQIP funds in each of fiscal years 2003 through 2006 for innovation grants
- Provides an additional \$50 million in EQIP funding to assist producers in the Klamath Basin

### ***Farmland Protection Program (FPP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007 with greater funding resources
- Removes the existing acreage limitation, expands the definition of eligible land, and makes agricultural land that contains historic or archaeological resources eligible for enrollment
- Includes nonprofit organizations as eligible entities for program participation
- Allows the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants (through an authorization of appropriations) for use in carrying out farm viability programs

### ***Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)***

- Authorizes enrollment of up to 2 million acres of restored, improved, or natural grassland, rangeland, and pastureland, including prairie

### ***Grassroots Sourcewater Protection***

- Authorizes an annual appropriation for fiscal years 2002 to 2006 to use technical capabilities of each state rural water association that operates a well-head or groundwater protection program

### ***Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control***

- Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Great Lakes Commission and in cooperation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary of the Army, to carry out a program in the Great Lakes basin for soil erosion and sediment control

### ***Ground and Surface Water Conservation***

- Provides a special initiative through EQIP for ground and surface water conservation
- Institutes cost-share payments, incentive payments, and loans to producers to carry out eligible water conservation activities, including irrigation improvements, conversion to less water intensive crops, and dryland farming

### ***Partnerships and Cooperation***

- Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into agreements to enhance technical and financial assistance provided to owners, operators, and producers to address natural resource issues related to agricultural production

***Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)***

- Provides permanent reauthorization of the program and makes technical and conforming changes to the program

***Small Watershed Rehabilitation***

- Provides mandatory spending from the Commodity Credit Corporation in addition to existing authorization of appropriations

***Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007
- Increases the overall program acreage cap to 2,275,000 acres
- Caps annual acreage enrollment at 250,000 acres

***Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)***

- Provides for up to 15 percent of annual WHIP funds for increased cost-share payments to producers to protect and restore essential plant and animal habitat using agreements with a duration of at least 15 years

***For More Information***

If you need more information about the Conservation Provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



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