

Program	Description	Who is eligible? What land is eligible?	Length and type of agreement	Financial incentives provided by USDA	Participant obligations
<b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Agricultural Land Easement</b>	ACEP works in partnership with eligible entities to protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.	State and local governments and non governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs.	Permanent easement	NRCS contributes up to 50 percent of the easement purchase based on appraised fair market value; up to 75 percent is available for grasslands of environmental significance.	Maintain agricultural land use.
<b>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Wetlands Reserve Easement</b>	ACEP provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through easements.	Private landowners of eligible croplands and woodlands. Applicants must have owned the land for at least 24 months. Land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program is eligible with a waiver.	Permanent and 30-year easement options	NRCS pays 75 to 100 percent of the easement value. NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement.	Maintain and restore wetlands as agreed. If restoration is needed, assist with cost.
<b>Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)</b>	AMA reduces the risk associated with marketing ag products by helping producers diversify their crops and livestock and implement conservation practices.	Producers who own or operate an ag operation. Lands include privately-owned cropland, pasture land or public land under private control during the contract.	Up to a 10-year contract	Participants cannot receive more than \$50,000 in AMA program payments per fiscal year. Historically underserved groups may receive up to 90 percent cost share.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.
<b>Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)</b>	CRP and CREP are land set-aside programs, aimed at reducing erosion, increasing wildlife habitat, improving water quality and enhancing forestland.	Owners/operators of eligible cropland owned for 12 months. Cropland must meet cropping history requirements and be physically and legally capable of being planted to an agricultural commodity.	10-15 years	An annual rental payment and a percentage of the cost to establish the practice. <i>*Note: The Farm Service Agency manages CRP/CREP; NRCS provides technical assistance.</i>	Establish, maintain and manage the practice per the conservation plan.
<b>Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)</b>	CSP rewards farmers who are good conservation stewards of their land and offers compensation for maintaining and agreeing to install additional enhancements on controlled acres.	Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland with existing conservation practices.	5-year contract with possible renewal	Annual payments for maintaining existing conservation practices and compensation for implementing additional enhancement activities.  Separate funding pools for beginning, limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers.	Maintain and increase level of current land stewardship.
<b>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)</b>	EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.	Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland, pasture land or non-industrial forest land.	2 - 10 year contract	Compensation for the cost of implementing conservation practices.  Beginning, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers may be eligible for higher payment rates.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.
<b>Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)</b>	RCPP promotes coordination with NRCS partners to deliver conservation programs to farmers through partnership agreements.	Agricultural or silvicultural producer associations, cooperatives or groups; state or local governments, American Indian tribes; municipal water treatment entities; conservation-driven nongovernmental organizations and institutions of higher education.	Up to five years	Compensation to producers through EQIP, CSP or ACEP for implementing eligible conservation activities and conservation easements.	Partner contributes financially to project.  Responsible for outreach to eligible producers  Conducts an assessment of the project's effects.

# A Guide to the 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Programs in Delaware



If you own or manage farmland or forest land in Delaware, then the 2014 Farm Bill conservation programs can help you address natural resource challenges on your land. Sign-up is continuous for all conservation programs.

You will need a plan (a conservation plan or a forest management plan) to identify the resource concerns and conservation practices needed to meet your environmental objectives. Contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field office for help in developing a plan and to apply for financial assistance to implement your conservation practices or purchase a conservation easement.

## NRCS and Conservation Districts: Partners in Conservation

NRCS is a federal agency that helps people help the land through scientifically based, locally led voluntary conservation efforts.

NRCS works in partnership with Delaware's three conservation districts, which help identify and address natural resource concerns in local communities, and coordinate public and private resources to meet local needs on a grassroots level.

A conservation district is a division of state government that works to conserve and wisely manage resources and partner with state and federal agencies to deliver programs, education and technical assistance to their communities. Visit [www.swc.dnrec.delaware.gov](http://www.swc.dnrec.delaware.gov), and click on "Conservation" then "Conservation Districts" to locate and learn more about your conservation district.

## Help for Veterans, Beginning, Limited Resource and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

The 2014 Farm Bill continues to address the unique circumstances and concerns of farmers who are beginning (farming fewer than 10 consecutive years), have limited resources and those who are socially disadvantaged farmers (those belonging to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice). Now, under the 2014 Farm Bill, a preference is included for beginning farmers who are also veterans. Incentives include up to 90 percent of the cost for practice implementation and advance payment opportunities. Special funding pools are available for beginning, limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers in several NRCS conservation programs.

## Simplifying Adjusted Gross Income

Adjusted gross income (AGI) changes have simplified eligibility determinations. Producers whose average AGI does not exceed \$900,000 are eligible to receive payments or benefits from most conservation programs, pending additional eligibility factor approvals. Those with an AGI exceeding \$900,000 will not be eligible. AGI requirements are effective starting in FY 2015.

## Delaware NRCS Offices

### • Dover Field Office

Serving Kent County  
800 Bay Rd.  
Dover, DE 19901  
302-741-2600 ext. 3

### • Georgetown Field Office

Serving Sussex County  
21315 Berlin Rd., Unit 3  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
302-856-3990 ext. 3

### • Newark Field Office

Serving New Castle County  
2430 Old County Rd.  
Newark, DE 19702  
302-832-3100 ext. 3

[www.de.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.de.nrcs.usda.gov)