

Notes:

Top 8 priorities for CRP, decided over CRPWG call Sept 2024 for AFWA spring 2025 fly in.

- ☑ Checked boxes are AFWA priorities mostly addressed by (H)ouse or (S)enate language seen as of Aug 2026. Unchecked boxes items not addressed in any language.
- ⊙ Circled dots are AFWA priorities partly addressed by (H)ouse or (S)enate language seen as of Aug 2026

AFWA Platform for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Priorities – Fall 2026

- ☐ Reauthorize CRP and incrementally increase the acreage cap to 40 million acres by the end of the Farm Bill. (AFWA top priority but not numbered as not considered by Congress)
- ☐ **1** - Eliminate rental rate limitations in §3834(d)(4)(E) on county average soil rental rates for both general (85%) and continuous (90%) sign-ups.
- ☑ **2** - Restore cost-sharing payments for all required mid-contract management activities except grazing, which should remain exempt from the 25 percent reduction in annual rental payment, if it is included in a conservation plan at the start of the CRP contract. Provide cost-share for all non-grazing mid-contract management activities on contracts entered into under the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. (S)
- ☐ **3** - Restore broad County Cropland Limitation waiver authority for all CRP sign-up types to exceed 25 percent of county cropland acreage.
- ☐ **4** - Require management, including thinning and prescribed burning, of southern pine tree stands to meet wildlife habitat objectives identified in State Wildlife Action Plans or national initiatives prior to reenrollment for all contracts (No language removing from current law), while restoring continual reenrollment eligibility for hardwood tree covers.
- ☐ **5** - Exempt grassland CRP with base (crop history) and all ACEP-WRE acres from the 25 percent county acreage cap found in 16 U.S.C. § 3844(f)(1).
- ☐ **6** - Restrict emergency haying and grazing on the same acres to no more than once every two years, and non-emergency haying to no more than once every three years. Restore limits on emergency and non-emergency haying to certain practices on not more than 50 percent and 75 percent of contract acres, respectively, as identified in the site-specific plan, and maintain the prohibition on haying during the primary nesting season. Restore limits on emergency grazing on all practices to not more than 75 percent of contract acres, as identified in the site-specific plan. (S - restores 50% limitation on emergency haying, outside the PNS or during the final 2 weeks of the PNS so long as it does not cause long-term damage to vegetative cover for wildlife populations. Codifying that these changes are not subject to NEPA)
- ☐ **7** - Amend 16 U.S.C. 3834(b)(2)(A) to exclude payments from third parties from the limitation on the sum of CRP payments exceeding the cost of practice establishment.
- ⊙ **8** - Continue to fund forest management incentives for the management of existing CRP pine stands, including thinning and prescribed burning, at \$12 million. (H) Restore the Forest Management Incentive payment limit in 16 U.S.C. 3834(c)(2)) to 150% to increase uptake of these management practices.
- ☑ Increase entity limitation on annual rental payments to account for changes in land rental rates and other economic factors. The current payment limitation of \$50,000 has not been changed since the program was originally authorized in 1985. AFWA recommends the limitation be increased to \$125,000 per year. (S)
- ☑ Provide 50% cost-share for perimeter fencing, internal cross fencing, and water facility development practices on all grass-based CRP covers to facilitate managed grazing and transition continually reenrolled CRP acres out of the program into long-term working grasslands. (S)
- ☑ Establish a cap for CRP Grasslands at 40% of total program acreage. Prioritize grassland enrollment of high-quality wildlife cover on expiring CRP acres and pastureland and rangeland at threat of conversion and provide incentives to upgrade existing grassland stands. (S – Capping Grasslands CRP enrollment at 12 million acres 44% of current 27M Ac cap)

- ☐ To maintain program integrity, make permanent the date-certain cropping history requirement of December 20, 2018, as it currently is in statute.
- ☒ Continue to offer General, Continuous, and CREP enrollment options in CRP on an annual basis **(No language removing in either H or S)**, ensuring that State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) projects are made available under the Continuous Signup. **(S)**
- ☒ Continue to require mid-contract management where needed to maintain high-value wildlife cover on all new and reenrolled CRP or CCRP acres to ensure wildlife habitat resource concerns continue to be met on all CRP acres. **(No language removing in either H or S)**
- ☐ Incorporate state and regional recommendations for eligible mid-contract management activities and criteria for cover management. Allow USDA, with concurrence from the applicable state fish and wildlife agency, to make mid-contract management activities voluntary for contracts in arid and semi-arid counties and a cover type practice of 40 EBI points or greater.
- ☒ Continue and enhance incentives – including but not limited to Signing Incentive Payments and Practice Incentive Payments for high-value wildlife cover types that are ecologically appropriate for the site. **(No language removing in either H or S)**
- ☒ Continue to prioritize enrollments in national and state Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs). Processes developed for prioritized enrollments should include national and state-level initiatives for fish and wildlife conservation. Only contracts containing conservation practices that benefit the priority wildlife species should receive the CPA points. **(No language removing in either H or S)**. Furthermore, if the total CRP acreage cap is increased, increase the percentage of cropland in a state included in a CPA from 25 percent back to 33 percent.
- ☐ Clarify that CRP participants, like NRCS program participants, are eligible to generate ecosystem service assets through program activities and that USDA does not assert a direct or indirect interest on these credits.

Senate 2026 Farmbill CRP Changes

Other changes to current CRP policy in Senate Ag Cmte passed legislation (9-16-26) not addressed by AFWA platform.

- Allowing expiring CRP with grazing infrastructure on it to be reenrolled in CRP
- Codifying CREP annual payments for retiring water rights to be equal to the irrigated cropland rental rate and if that land was going to be continued to be farmed as dryland cropland the payment would be the difference between the irrigated rental rate and the dryland rental rate.
- Extending FWP through 2031
- CRP rental rates shall be determined for a tract of land based on 3 predominant cropland soils on that tract and apply that rental rate to any land within the tract enrolled in CRP.
- Prohibits the Secretary from applying an adjustment to any CRP payments based on the rate of inflation.