

# **The Food Security Act of 1985**

**The 1985 Farm Bill**

**The Conservation  
Reserve Program  
(CRP)**



# The Food Security Act (1985)

- **Aka – The 1985 Farm Bill**
- **Title XII established the conservation reserve program (CRP)**

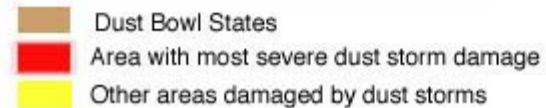


# CRP Purpose

- **It provides an opportunity for farmers to enter into a 10-15 year contract with the USDA, to take highly erodible land out of production, and receive annual rental payments for returning the land to a permanent vegetative cover with trees, and native grasses.**

# History of CRP

- CRP roots from the Soil Bank Act of 1956
  - DUST BOWL!
- This act was followed by two similar long-term contract programs



# History of CRP (cont.)



- **1970's:**
  - Price of farm commodities rose
  - U.S producers responded by planting rangelands, pasture lands & marginal crop lands
- **Early 1980's:**
  - USDA studies report nations crop lands eroding
  - Soil loss = exceeded 3 billion tons per year
  - Species declines also reported, due to the destruction of natural habitat from extensive farming
- **In 1985 congress passed The Conservation Reserve Program under the Food Security Act (Title XII)**

# GOALS OF CRP:



- **Reduce soil erosion on highly erodible cropland**
- **Increase & improve wildlife habitats**
- **Protect nations long term capabilities to produce food & fiber**
- **Provide income support to farmers by curbing the production of surplus commodities**

# GOALS OF CRP (cont):

- Protects ground and surface water by reducing run off & sedimentation
- Help to clarify and clean lakes, rivers, streams and ponds



# CRP - The 1990 & 1996 Acts

- **Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act (FACT 1990)**
  - **Extended CRP through 1995 & added 2.5 million acres to the program**
- **Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (FAIR 1996)**
  - **Extended through 2002**
  - **Allows producer to withdraw at any time subject to 60 day notice**

# Eligible Land

- **Cropland that is planted to an agricultural commodity 2 of the 5 most recent crop years (including field margins) and which is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity; or**
- **Marginal pastureland that is either:**
  - **Acreage enrolled in the Water Bank Program;**  
**or**
  - **Suitable for use as a riparian buffer to be planted to trees.**

# Additional Requirements

In addition, CRP lands must meet one of the following:

- Be considered highly erodible land ( $EI \geq 8$ )
- Be considered a cropped wetland
- Be devoted to any of a number of highly beneficial environmental practices, such as filter strips, riparian buffers, grass waterways, shelterbelts, wellhead protection areas, etc.
- Be subject to scour erosion
- Be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area
- Be cropland associated with or surrounding noncropped wetlands.



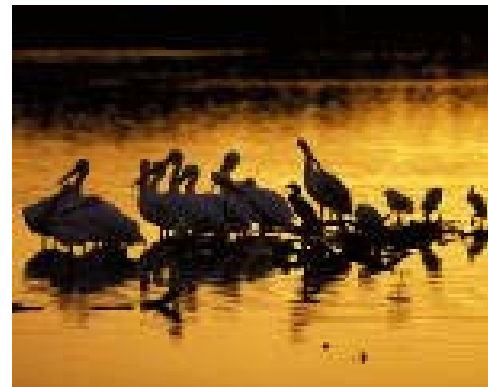
# Ranking Criteria

## **Environmental Benefits Index (EBI):**

- **Wildlife habitat benefits**
- **Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff, and leaching;**
- **On-farm benefits of reduced erosion;**
- **Likelihood of long-term benefits;**
- **Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion;**
- **Benefits of enrollment in priority areas**
- **Cost**

# New CRP Eligibility and Payments

- **Cropland eligibility criteria were modified from past sign-ups**
  - **Emphasized more on land considered highly erodible land**
  - **Restore & expand Americas wetland acres**



## **New CRP Eligibility and Payments (2002)**

- **Producers were given open access to information on how the environmental benefits index was calculated and on the maximum rental payment the Government would accept for their cropland based on their soils productivity prior to submitting a bid. Applicants were free to request any rental amount, but bids that exceeded the bid cap were rejected, and bidding less than the cap increased ones likelihood of being accepted.**

## **New CRP Eligibility and Payments (cont)**

- **State Farm Service Agency (FSA) committees could use national standards to rank bids or adjust standards to meet state goals**
- **Filter strips and riparian buffer areas adjacent to water bodies along waterways were eligible for a 10% incentive payment to promote enrollment**
- **Annual CRP payments**
  - **amount to approximately \$1.8 billion**
  - **an average of about \$50.00 per acre**

# CRP Success

- **Voluntary partnership between individuals & Government**
- **Provides incentives and technical assistance**
- **Stabilizes land that is subject to erosion, where vegetation can improve water quality or provide food and habitat for wildlife**
- **Volunteerism makes the CRP an effective Federal conservation program**

# Continuous Sign-Up

- **Eligible acreage devoted to certain special conservation practices, such as riparian buffers, filter strips, grass waterways, shelterbelts, living snow fences, contour grass strips, salt tolerant vegetation, and shallow water areas for wildlife, may be enrolled at any time under continuous sign-up and are not subject to competitive bidding. In addition, land within a designated public wellhead area may be eligible to be enrolled on a continuous basis**

# **Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (FAIR 1996)**

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

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## Description:

- **The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost sharing to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat**

# Administration of WHIP:

- **Landowners prepare and implement a wildlife habitat plan**
  - **Describes landowner's goals for improving wildlife habitat**
  - **Includes a list of practices and a schedule**
  - **Details steps necessary to maintain for the life of the agreement**
- **The NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for the initial establishment of wildlife habitat easement purchase payments.**

# Cost-Share Assistance/Agreement

- Reimburse up to 75 percent of costs
- Federal or State wildlife agencies or private organizations may provide additional funding
- Generally the total cost share cannot exceed \$10,000 per contract
- The cost-share agreement = minimum of 10 years (Emergency programs exist)
- Landowner agrees to maintain the cost-shared practices and allow NRCS access to monitor the effectiveness of the practices

# Eligible Land

- **Generally, five acres is the minimum contract size. Almost any type of land may be eligible, including:**
  - **agricultural or non-agricultural land**
  - **woodlots**
  - **pasture land**
  - **streambanks**
- **Land that was not eligible for other habitat restoration programs may be eligible for WHIP.**
- **Tribal Lands**

# Ineligible Land

- **Land currently enrolled in:**
  - **Water Bank Program**
  - **Conservation Reserve Program**
  - **Wetlands Reserve Program**
  - **Emergency Watershed Protection Program**
- **Other ineligible lands include:**
  - **Land used for mitigation**
  - **Sites owned by the Federal Government unless...**
  - **USDA determines that onsite or offsite conditions would undermine or reduce the benefits of habitat development.**

# Ranking Criteria

## Priority Consideration Given:

- Habitats for declining or sensitive WL species
- Practices beneficial to fish and wildlife that may not otherwise be funded
- Wildlife and fishery habitats identified by State and local partners and Indian tribes



# Priority Habitat Types (Texas):

- Upland prairies and Savannah
- Riparian Zones and Woody Corridors
- Wetlands



# Priority Species (Texas):

- **Game Species:**
  - white-tailed deer
  - mule deer
  - desert big horn sheep
- **Non- Game Species:**
  - ocelots
  - jaquarundi
- **Riparian Species:**
  - fountain darter
  - San Marcos Gambusia & Salamander
  - Texas Blind Salamander.
- **Birds:**
  - Bobwhite quail
  - wild turkey
  - ring-necked pheasant
  - Attwaters prairie chicken
  - golden cheek warbler
  - red-cockaded woodpecker
  - black-cap vireo

# Emphasized Practices (Texas);

- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Wildlife Watering Facility
- Brush Management
- Prescribed Burning
- Fencing
- Range Seeding
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Wetland Development or Restoration
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Windbreak/Shelter belt Establishment

# **Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act (FACT 1990)**

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

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## **Description:**

**The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible National goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land**

# Goals of EQIP:

- **Encourage producer to:**
  - **Adopt land management practices, such as:**
    - **nutrient management**
    - **manure management**
    - **integrated pest management**
    - **irrigation water management**
    - **wildlife habitat management**
  - **Develop a CNMP and components of a CNMP.**

# Application Process:

- **EQIP applications are accepted yearlong**
- **NRCS evaluates each application using a state and locally developed evaluation process**
- **Higher priorities are given to applications that:**
  - **encourage the use of cost-effective conservation practices**
  - **address National conservation priorities**
  - **optimize environmental benefits.**

# Administration of EQIP:

- **EQIP plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer**
- **Contracts for confined livestock feeding operations require development and implementation of a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP).**
- **Farmers and ranchers may elect to use an approved third-party provider for technical assistance.**

# Cost-Share Assistance/Agreement

- Reimburse up to 75 percent of costs
- Limited resource farmers and beginning farmers eligible up to 90 percent of costs
- Contracts with a minimum term of one year after implementation of the last scheduled practice and a maximum term of ten years
- Total cost-share limited to \$450,000 per individual over the period of the 2002 Farm Bill
- Starting in FY 2003:
  - No individual or entity may receive EQIP payments in any crop year in which their average adjusted gross income for preceding three years > \$2.5 million, unless 75 percent of that income is from farming, ranching, or forestry interests.

# Conservation Innovation Grants

**EQIP provides opportunities for Conservation Innovation Grants, which are competitive grant awards to stimulate innovative approaches to environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Grants may not exceed 50% of the total cost of the project.**

# Ground & Surface Water Conservation

**EQIP provides for additional funding specifically to:**

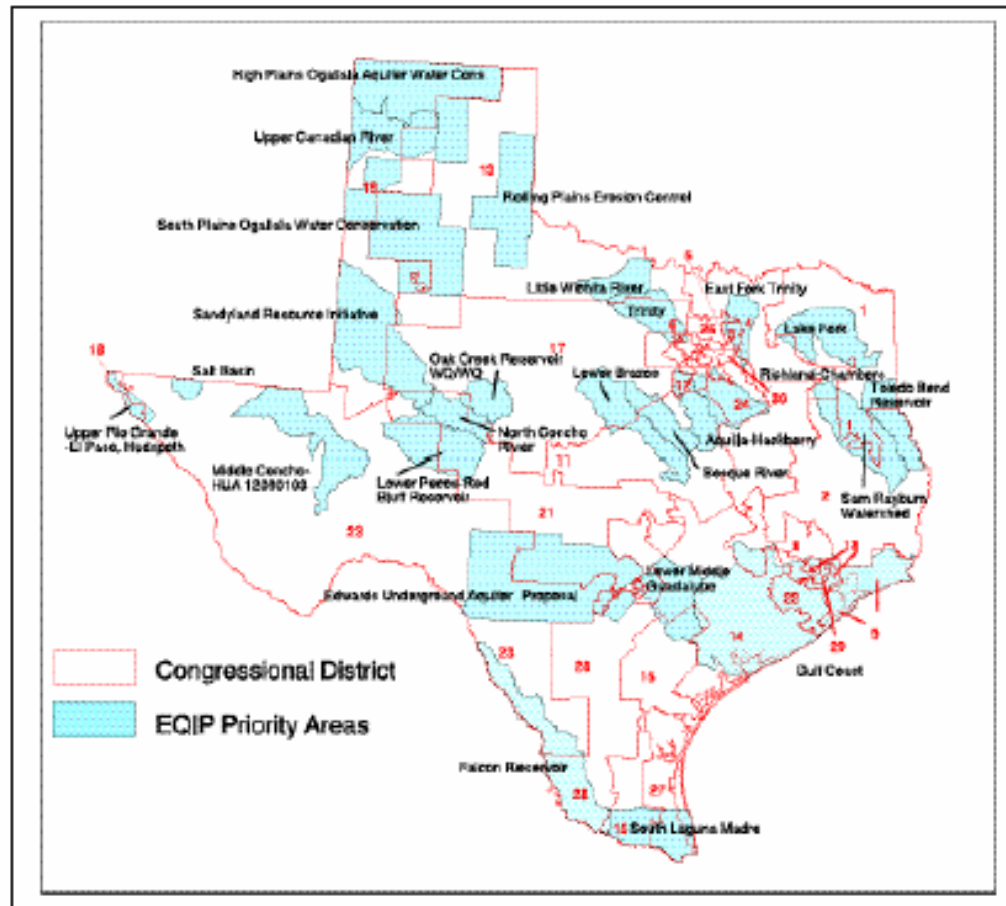
- **Promote ground and surface water conservation activities to improve irrigation systems**
- **Convert to the production of less water intensive agricultural commodities**
- **Improve water storage through measures such as water banking and groundwater recharge**
- **Institute other measures that improve groundwater and surface water conservation**

# Eligible Land:

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- **Land owned by Tribes and private producers:**
  - **Cropland**
  - **Rangeland**
  - **Pasture**
  - **Private non-industrial forestland**
  - **Other farm or ranch lands**

# EQIP Priority Areas (Texas)



# Texas EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional Districts

	<u>Fiscal Year 2001</u>		<u>Cumulative Total (97 - 01)</u>	
<b>Districts</b>	<b>Obligated # of Dollars</b>	<b>Contracts</b>	<b>Obligated # of Dollars</b>	<b>Contracts</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>\$1,548,814</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>\$8,165,895</b>	<b>1,171</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>\$1,810,554</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>\$7,761,620</b>	<b>1,011</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>\$1,406,391</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>\$5,596,736</b>	<b>612</b>
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>\$12,128,879</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>\$60,157,216</b>	<b>8,286</b>