

# News Release

Contact: [FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov](mailto:FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov)

## Iowa Farmers Partner with NRCS to Invest Millions in Conservation Funding

**Des Moines, IA – Dec. 29, 2025** – Iowa farmers and other private landowners invested millions in conservation practices to help treat natural resource issues on their lands last year, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Through four major Farm Bill conservation programs offered in Iowa, the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (ACEP), [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP), [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), and [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP), Iowa farmers contracted with NRCS to address natural resource concerns such as soil erosion and water quality on about 258,000 private land acres in fiscal year 2025 (FY25).

Overall, NRCS obligated \$75.3 million in conservation practice funding to Iowa farmers in FY25 through 1,337 Farm Bill program contracts. Farmers and other USDA customers can sign up for Farm Bill conservation programs on a continuous basis, and most are funded through three- to five-year contracts.

State Conservationist Jon Hubbert says Iowa farmers, contractors, agribusiness companies, and state and local government agencies should be congratulated for the work they accomplished alongside NRCS in 2025. "Iowa is unique in the way we partner with so many others to implement conservation plans, practices and programs," he said. "It's great to see the continued interest in conservation here in Iowa. Working together with Iowa landowners, we can help them meet their conservation goals."

The most popular conservation practices in Iowa, by number of contracts with Iowa NRCS throughout 2025, include:

- Grazing Management
- Cover Crop
- Fence (to support grazing management)
- Brush Management
- Watering Facility (to support grazing management)

### Program Breakdown

**ACEP:** NRCS helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms through conservation easements. During FY25, NRCS obligated about \$6.9 million through three new easements that will cover 523 acres. Included in ACEP funding is more than \$1 million in stewardship activities

on existing easements, which could include prescribed burns, tree removal, or controlling invasive species. There are 1,722 federally funded easements in Iowa across 197,000 acres.

**CSP:** Through CSP, NRCS helps farmers build a customized plan to meet their conservation goals and needs. Iowa NRCS obligated \$21 million through new and renewed CSP contracts during the past year to 320 landowners who signed five-year contracts, covering about 142,000 acres.

Statewide leaders in CSP:

- **Jackson County** led the state for the third consecutive year with 30 new and renewed CSP contracts, totaling 6,878 acres, with an obligation of nearly \$1.5 million.
- **Jones County** was next with 24 contracts, covering 17,467 acres and an obligation of \$2.6 million.
- **Winneshiek County** had the third most CSP contracts with 22, covering 6,638 acres, obligating more than \$1 million.

**EQIP:** Iowa NRCS contracted about 43 percent of new federal conservation funding through EQIP – a voluntary program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality, where farmers can choose from a conservation list developed at the county level to treat local resource issues. Through EQIP, NRCS obligated \$32.2 million covering 65,658 acres through 467 contracts.

Statewide leaders in EQIP:

- **Lucas County** led the state with 18 new EQIP contracts that will help treat resource concerns on 2,553 acres at an obligation of nearly \$1.4 million.
- **Wapello County** was second in Iowa with 16 contracts that will cover 5,450 acres for total obligation of nearly \$1.7 million.
- **Wayne County** had the third most EQIP contracts with 15, covering 2,541 acres, obligating \$708,978.

Statewide EQIP highlights:

- Through the **Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)**, Iowa NRCS obligated more than \$4.6 million, covering 15,840 acres through 50 new contracts. The goal of MRBI is for landowners to adopt practices that will minimize the contributions of nitrogen and phosphorus to surface waters within the Mississippi River basin.
- Iowa NRCS obligated more than \$5 million through 276 program contracts, covering about 10,500 acres, to fund **wildlife habitat practices** statewide. Some of the practices include conservation cover, brush management, tree/shrub establishment, wetland restoration, and wildlife habitat planting.
- Through the **National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)**, Iowa NRCS obligated nearly \$1.5 million through 19 contracts covering 3,658 acres. Through NWQI, NRCS provides targeted funding to treat water quality problems in small watersheds.

**RCPP:** Iowa NRCS provided more than \$15 million to Iowans in 2025 through RCPP projects that will treat resource concerns on more than 50,000 acres. NRCS assisted producers through 13 partnership agreements and 547 contracts. For the four RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangement (AFA) projects, a conservation partner directed the project, taking the lead in conservation planning and contracting.

## **Disaster Recovery**

NRCS also helped several Iowa communities recover from recent flooding and damaging high winds through with assistance through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program. NRCS funding exceeded \$1.4 million to assist the Cities of Pleasant Hill, Johnston, and Spencer, and Polk and Webster Counties by helping with debris clearing and removal and stream bank protection.

For more information, please visit [nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#). Detailed Iowa NRCS program results and information are available at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2025-12/2025At-A-Glance.pdf> or <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/rca-data-viewer>.

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