

Appendix 1. Farm Service Agency Notice Implementing Use of Online Reporting Form

For: State Offices and State CREP Partners

FY 2020 CREP Annual Report and Project Administration

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 CREP Annual Report

A Background

CREP was established under CRP to address specific recognized environmental issues of State and National importance. Each CREP agreement requires the State to provide a CREP annual performance report to FSA by the date specified in the CREP agreement. The CREP annual performance report is a critical tool used to:

- monitor program accomplishments
- justify average cost per acre of enrollment
- justify continued Federal and State CREP funding
- indicate continued State partner financial and administrative support
- identify possible changes to ensure CREP goals are achieved in a cost-effective manner.

Note: Each CREP annual performance report must contain certain information, including a detailed monitoring report, according to FSA CRP National directives and the terms of the CREP agreement.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) requires USDA to submit an annual report to Congress on the status of each CREP. **The information provided in the CREP annual performance report will be used to complete the annual report to Congress for FY 2020.**

Disposal Date	Distribution
June 1, 2021	State Offices; State Offices relay to State CREP Partners

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1 CREP Annual Report (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice reminds FSA State Offices that FY 2020 CREP annual performance reports are due by the date specified in the CREP agreement, and must provide the information specified in the CREP agreement, FSA CRP National directives, the online report, and this notice.

The due date for the FY 2020 CREP annual performance report is December 31, 2020, for any CREP agreement that does not specify a due date.

C Automated Online Report

FSA has developed an automated online CREP annual report that each State must use to submit its required annual CREP performance report. The online report is designed to ensure all needed data for the USDA report to Congress is provided in a consistent and uniform manner.

Starting with FY 2020, States must use the online CREP annual report.

In addition to the online report, States may submit the required annual report in the same manner the report has been provided in the past.

The National Office Program Manager for CREP will provide each State, through the FSA State Office, with access to the online report via separate communication. Instructions for completing the online report will also be provided.

Once a State submits an online report, the State will no longer have access to the submitted report to make any changes. States must ensure the accuracy and completeness of the online report prior to submission. States may request, through the FSA State Office, a copy of the submitted report. State FSA Office will contact the National Office Program Manager for CREP to request a copy of the report.

Separate annual performance reports must be submitted for each CREP project. States with more than 1 CREP project must provide a **separate** annual performance report for each project.

Important: Failure to submit the CREP annual performance report is a violation of the terms of the CREP agreement and will be reflected in USDA's report to Congress.

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1 CREP Annual Report (Continued)

D Annual Performance Reports

Annual CREP performance reports must:

- be provided for each CREP project by the required deadline in the CREP agreement, even if there have been no substantial new enrollments or other major project changes since the previous annual report was submitted

Exceptions: CREP annual performance reports are:

- not required for CREP projects that have expired or been terminated in FY 2020 or before
- not required for CREP projects that were suspended for enrollment for all of FY 2020
- required for CREP projects that were suspended for enrollment in FY 2020, but not for the entire FY.

Notes: Separate annual performance reports must be submitted for each CREP project. States with more than 1 CREP project must provide a **separate** annual performance report for each project.

See subparagraph B for the report due date if the CREP agreement does not specify a date.

- identify the following:
 - accomplishments in achieving each of the goals and purpose of the agreement
- Note:** See subparagraph E for more information about identifying accomplishments.
- reason(s) for not obtaining, or delay in obtaining, the identified goals and purpose of the CREP agreement, if applicable, and actions taken or that will be taken in the following FY to obtain the stated goals and objectives
 - reason(s) new enrollment levels are below expected, if applicable, and actions taken or that will be taken in the following FY to address the level of new enrollments.

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1 CREP Annual Report (Continued)

E Identifying Accomplishments

CREP annual performance reports must identify the accomplishments, or lack thereof, in achieving the purpose and **each** of the goals of CREP. The report must address **each** of the specific goals and purposes identified in the CREP agreement in detail, and provide the source of the data used to support the accomplishments provided.

Example: The goals of the ABC CREP agreement are to reduce erosion on cropland of 10,000 tons per year, reduce 14,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering the ABC River per year, and increase the XYZ bird population by 3,000 birds annually. The ABC CREP annual performance report must identify the:

- tons of erosion reduced from cropland in the CREP area in the last year and provide the source used in determining the amount of erosion reduced
- pounds of phosphorous reduced from entering ABC River in the CREP area in the last year and provide the source used in determining the amount of phosphorus reduced
- number of XYZ birds increased in CREP area in the last year and provide the source used in determining the number of XYZ birds.

An estimate of the progress in meeting each of the goals and purpose of the CREP agreement **must** be provided if sufficient monitoring and evaluation measures have not been conducted to provide documented accomplishments. The method used to reach any estimated accomplishment must also be identified.

F Annual Report to Congress

The 2018 Farm Bill requires USDA to submit an annual report to Congress on the status of each CREP. The information provided in the State's annual performance report will be used to complete the annual report to Congress.

The State's annual performance report may be returned if the report does not include all the required information in sufficient detail. Failure of a State to provide its complete report within the time period specified in the CREP agreement will be included in the USDA's annual report to Congress.

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2 General CREP Policy and Processing Offers

A Legal Agreements

CREP is administered with legal binding agreements between CCC and State governments. These agreements often include project contributions from local non-governmental organizations in a partnership effort. FSA State Offices must immediately notify Conservation Division (CD) if any State CREP partners discontinue providing payments, in-kind commitments, or other benefits specified in the CREP agreement.

FSA State and County Offices may **not** establish or modify CREP operating policies and/or procedures without prior written approval from the National Office. All State amendments supplementing 2-CRP regarding CREP must be approved by CD **before** publication, including 2-CRP amendments completed because of revising or amending CREP agreements.

B Using TERRA and CREP Shapefiles to Process Offers

The CRP TERRA Tool must be used for all offers to enroll land through a CREP.

The GIS Environment Tool is used to control settings for TERRA, including default directories for data storage and whether Conservation Web Services are used. CREP data is not part of the Conservation Web Services.

Prior to running TERRA, users must run the GIS Environment Tool and select the appropriate administrative county and primary state.

Users must place a check mark next to “Use Enable Conservation and County Web Services” on the Settings tab in the GIS Environment Tool.

When creating a TERRA scenario for an offer to enroll land in CRP under a CREP, the CREP Project Area shapefile must be added to TERRA after selecting the signup.

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3 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices managing 1 or more CREP agreements will:

- review each CREP agreement for the due date of the CREP annual performance report
- inform the State contact person of the:
 - annual report due date
 - required use and access to the automated online report
 - use of the data provided by the State for USDA's report to Congress
 - option to request a copy of the completed report after the State submits it
- provide a copy of this notice to State CREP point of contact
- provide State CREP point of contact with relevant CREP enrollment and other data, such as annual rental payment, incentive payment, and cost-share payment data, according to the terms of the CREP agreement
- notify the FSA National Program Manager for CREP of any known issues about timely submission of CREP annual performance reports by COB November 30, 2020.