

Cropland Conversion

Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program (VACS)



Practice Requirements and Rates

The cost-share rate is 75% of the eligible component costs, in addition to a one-time incentive payment based on the project lifespan:

- \$25 per acre for a 5 year contract
- \$100 per acre for a 10 year contract
- \$150 per acre for a 15 year contract

Participants may select their project lifespan. Lifespan begins on January 1st of the calendar year following payment.

Eligible cost-share components:

- Appropriate seed
- Minerals (fertilizer, lime, manure*)
*If manure is purchased from off farm, a bill and nutrient analysis must be presented
- Herbicide
- Pesticide
- Applicable labor and equipment costs

This practice may be eligible for State tax credit in the amount of 25% of eligible out of pocket expenses. Tax credit amount cannot to exceed \$25,000.

What is Cropland Conversion?

This practice incentivizes the conversion of cropland to pasture or hay production. This long-term vegetated cover on cropland reduces soil loss and erosion. Cropland conversion also provides a nutrient management benefit by helping reduce nutrient loss and leaching, enhancing local water quality.

Program Details

The cropland conversion practice reimburses the landowner for converting cropland to healthy, well-maintained sod.

This practice is designed for row-crop conversion to hay or pasture for fields with a minimum three year cropping history. The pasture and/or hay land planted can be grazed or harvested.

Reseeding or pasture improvement is not eligible under this practice. Pure stands of alfalfa are not eligible for this practice.

To be eligible for this practice, the landowner must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan (NMP) during the year of establishment. A nutrient management plan for the following years of the practice lifespan is optional. The State has certified planners to write NMPs at no charge to producers.

District staff will verify planting and adequate cover required prior to cost share payment.

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District:

Lord Fairfax: 540-465-2424 ext. 5
(Clarke, Frederick, Warren, Shenandoah, City of Winchester)

Shenandoah Valley: 540-534-3105
(Rockingham, Page, City of Harrisonburg)

Headwaters: 540-248-0148
(Augusta, City of Staunton, City of Waynesboro)

