



# Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) North Carolina - The Update

## Fiscal Year FY 2026 Program Updates

### CSP Updates

Some major updates have been added to CSP:

- CSP Contract limit has increased from \$200,000 to \$300,000 for individuals and entities
- CSP Contract limit has increased from \$400,000 to \$600,000 for joint operations
- Enhancements have been removed from CSP and only practices are being offered moving forward. All practices/scenarios are paid at 75% cost share.
- All CSP contracts will receive a minimum of \$4000 per year for 5 years plus financial assistance for additional activities the participant agrees to install as part of their contract.

### Payment Schedule

Per the national payment schedule training held on January 22, 2026, states can create their own state payment schedules from the national payment schedules released.

- States can remove any practices that are not applicable to the state to reduce improper planning and contracting.
- With new changes to the payment schedule, new scenarios have been established that we must identify are not applicable. Because scenarios cannot be removed, we have determine a method of identifying which scenarios should or should not be a part of the planning or contract.

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

In FY 2026, we were initially allocated \$4.4 million for ACEP-ALE which outpaced the average of the last 5 years of \$1.5 million.

Status on current projects:

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Cont.

Status on current projects:

- Currently processing 30 ACEP-ALE applications
- 2 RCPP-ALE projects funded with partnership of NCDA-Farmland Trust
- 6 remaining RCPP applications currently processing
- 2 easements closed in the last 30 days

### General Updates

#### One Farmer, One File

On February 26, 2026, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced the "One Farmer, One File" initiative. This creates a single digital record that follows a farmer across various USDA agencies, eliminating the need to re-enter the same information for different programs. This connects systems from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA). USDA began work on this system in 2025 and plans to greatly advance the effort in 2026. The USDA expects the project to be fully finalized by 2028.

**North Carolina  
Natural Resources  
Conservation  
Service**

## General Updates Cont.

### Notice of Funding Opportunities & Similar Requests

States now must obtain approval from NHQ prior to submitting the following to Grants and Agreements Division (GAD) or the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO):

- A new agreement
- A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- An agreement amendment request
- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Actions that do NOT require NHQ approval:

- Program Manager /Program Technical Contact changes
- Close out / Final payment, including replacement of expired funds related to final payment
- Acceptance of Performance Reports
- Payments (Reimbursement /Advance Payments)
- Unfilled Customer Order (UCO) (these are reimbursable agreements where NRCS is providing the service).

### Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program

States will set aside 25% of their EQIP and CSP financial assistance funding. Both technical and financial resources will be available to producers at all stages of implementing regenerative agriculture, from those just starting out to those with more experience.

The Regenerative Pilot Program has three requirements:

- Whole Farm Assessment: A complete assessment of all resource concerns is required, with the goal of establishing a whole farm plan before the end of the contract period. The whole-farm assessment includes all resource concerns, and it must meet NRCS planning criteria in the soil and water resource categories.
- Primary Practices: At least one primary regenerative management practice must be implemented by the end of the contract. Additional NRCS practices can support the objectives of regenerative agriculture, depending on the producer's goals and objectives
- Soil Health Testing: Participants must agree to perform soil health testing in the first and last year of the contract (at a minimum) to establish a starting baseline and to record the resulting changes. Financial assistance for soil testing will be available to both producers who have not previously completed soil testing and producers who are already testing their soil.

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