



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP)



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FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Regenerative Pilot Program

Regenerative agriculture is a conservation management approach that emphasizes natural resources through improved soil health, water management, and natural vitality for the productivity and prosperity of American agriculture and communities. The Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) is a farmer-first, outcomes-based approach to conservation designed to return the agency to its core mission, helping people help the land, by addressing whole-farm resource concerns through support for voluntary regenerative agriculture conservation plans.

NRCS website

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/regenerative-pilot-program>

Regenerative Pilot Program Requirements

- Whole Farm Assessment
- Primary Practices
- Soil Health Testing
- Minimum 5-year contract



Whole Farm Assessment

Defined for Regen Program Pilot

- **EQIP RPP** - EQIP policy supports a subset of land under control of the customer to be part of the application, therefore in conjunction with input from the customer the planner will determine the extent of the whole farm.
 - Logical factors such as multiple farming enterprises (row crops, orchard, livestock, owned verses leased lands etc.), or extensive geographical separation of land could determine separate whole farms.
- **CSP RPP** - follows CSP policy requiring all land that the operator has control of for 5 years to be a part of the application and thus the whole farm assessment.

Environmental Quality
Incentives Program (EQIP)

Conservation Stewardship
Program (CSP)

Note: When working with tribes to complete a whole farm assessment, NRCS and the Tribe will follow NI 440 307.14 , in combination with program policies found in CPM 440 Part 530 to address the unique relationship between the Tribe and its members so as not to create an undue hardship.

RPP Primary Practices and Required Activity

Conservation Practices

Code	Asset Name	Crop	Forest	Pasture	Range
328	Conservation Crop Rotation	Y	N	N	N
330	Contour Farming	Y	N	N	N
331	Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crop	Y	N	N	N
340	Cover Crop	Y	Y	Y	N
554	Drainage Water Management	Y	Y	Y	Y
511	Forage Harvest Management	Y	Y	Y	Y
666	Forest Stand Improvement	N	Y	Y	N
449	Irrigation Water Management	Y	Y	Y	N
484	Mulching	Y	Y	Y	Y
590	Nutrient Management	Y	Y	Y	N
595	Pest Management Conservation System	Y	Y	Y	Y
528	Prescribed Grazing	Y	Y	Y	Y
329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till	Y	N	N	N
345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced	Y	N	N	N
585	Stripcropping	Y	N	N	N

Conservation Activity

Code	Asset Name
CEMA 216	Soil Health Testing

- To be eligible a minimum of one Primary RPP Practice
 - Existing or
 - Planned
- Soil Health Testing 216 planned beginning and end of plan/contract (1yr & 5yr)

Conservation Plan Done!

RPP EQIP

EQIP

To qualify for Regen Pilot Program:

- All land that encompasses the “whole farm” will be evaluated
- All Resource Concerns evaluated
- Minimum 5-year contract

and

At least one land unit in the assessment must meet the following:

- One Primary Regen Practice planned or currently being implemented
- Soil and Water RC thresholds are at met condition by end of contract
- Soil Health Testing beginning and end of contract

Conservation Plan Done!

RPP CSP

CSP

- To qualify for Regen Pilot Program:
 - All land under control for the life of the contract will be evaluated
 - All Resource Concerns evaluated
 - Meet CSP Stewardship Threshold Eligibility
 - *RPP Addition* - Soil and Water RC thresholds are at met condition by end of contract On at least one land use (of range, pasture, crop, forest)

and

At least one land unit in the assessment must meet the following:

- One Primary Regen Practice planned or currently being implemented
- Soil Health Testing beginning and end of contract

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 Health Testing** will be available to both producers who have not previously completed soil testing and producers who are already testing their soil.



United States Department of Agriculture

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Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity

Soil Health Testing
CEMA 216

DEFINITION
Quantitative testing for biological, chemical, and physical characteristics of soil and constraints using approved laboratory methods.

APPLICABLE LAND USES
All Land Uses.

REQUIREMENTS

Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA)

Code	Asset Name
CEMA 216	Soil Health Testing

[CEMA 216 Soil Health Testing 1-2026R](#)

Soil Health Testing CEMA 216

Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (CEMAs)

CEMA are provided by Qualified Individuals (QIs). QIs self-certify they meet qualification criteria stated in a CEMA document. Professional licenses, accreditations, certifications, and experience typify qualification criteria for CEMA QIs. A QI may, or may not also hold TSP certification.

A QI for Soil Health Testing CEMA 216 meets one of the following:

- 1) Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) or Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg) through the American Society of Agronomy or a Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) or Associate Professional Soil Scientist (APSS) through the Soil Science Society of America.
- 2) Technical Service Providers (TSP) certified for Soil Health Management Plan Conservation Practice Activity (116) or Soil Health Management Design and Implementation Activity (162).
- 3) An associate degree or higher in an agricultural or soil science field with at least 2 years of experience collecting soil for laboratory analysis.
- 4) Individuals working under the guidance or management of a QI are allowed to collect soil samples for this CEMA.

Excerpt from CEMA 216 Soil Health Testing document

Qualified Individuals (QIs)

Qualified Individuals are essentially a CONTRACTOR hired by the program participant. The only difference is that this contractor must meet specific criteria.

NRCS staff are never the QI.

NRCS does not approve or reject the qualifications of a Qualified Individual (QI).

We do not maintain a list of QIs

TSPs who meet the qualification requirements for that CEMA can also be hired as a QI.



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Questions and Answers



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