

NYS CREP

New York State
Conservation Reserve
Enhancement Program

UPDATE FOR SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

DECEMBER 2003

NYS CREP AGREEMENT SIGNED

Rain was falling and the streams were flowing on the afternoon of October 29 as 200 people assembled at Herrington Farms in Troy to celebrate the announcement of the statewide CREP program. Federal Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, State Agriculture Commissioner Nathan Rudgers and State Soil & Water Conservation Committee Chairman Dennis Hill signed this historic agreement, and other dignitaries gathered to welcome the new program. CREP became active immediately, and FSA offices began accepting sign-ups. For more information on the ceremony, please visit the Ag & Markets web site at: <http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AD/releaseList.asp>



DISTRICTS' ROLE IN CREP

The NYS CREP program is an excellent opportunity to put conservation practices on the land, but we can't make it work from here in Albany. We need you! It's great to see some Districts embracing this program, and we hope others will join in. Districts are encouraged to take an active role in telling farmers about CREP and to take on the technical assistance role if they wish. While FSA will be handling the CREP contracts, either Districts or NRCS will provide technical assistance. Many Districts have been asking how this technical assistance business works. We are currently working with NRCS on an agreement for reimbursing Districts for providing technical services for CREP. The technical assistance role will involve preparing a CREP plan and overseeing implementation of the plan. We will have more details for you as soon as we can. In the mean time, please plan on attending a training session in January to gain technical knowledge and learn what is expected in a CREP plan.

CONTEST!

NAME THAT PROGRAM

We know "CREP" isn't the catchiest name in the world, so we're looking for your creative ideas. Please submit your suggestions for a nickname for CREP to Emily Svenson by December 24. Everyone who enters will receive a small prize. If your suggestion is selected for use statewide, you will receive AEM hats for everyone in your office. Submit ideas by **December 24** to emily.svenson@agmkt.state.ny.us or fax to 518-457-3412.

SAVE THE DATE!

CREP training is coming to a location near you in January. Four training sessions will be held at sites around the state for District, FSA and NRCS staff. The training will cover both programmatic and technical aspects of CREP. If you are at all interested in being involved with CREP, please plan to attend one of the training sessions:

- January 7 – Millbrook
- January 9 – Northern NY (location TBA)
- January 21 – Auburn
- January 22 – Mt. Morris

More information will be sent to all Districts soon.

GRANT PROGRAM CLARIFICATION

Districts are great at combining funds to get projects done, and it's encouraging to see so many Districts interested in matching CREP funds with Ag Nonpoint Source grants. We want to make sure everyone realizes that there is not a separate "pot of money" in the Ag NPS program to match CREP projects. If you wish to seek Ag NPS funds to match CREP practices (up to 45% state match) or for other practices on a CREP farm, you can submit an application through the next round of the Ag NPS program. These proposals will compete for funding with all other proposals.

*For more information about NYS CREP, contact the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee:
518-457-8886 or emily.svenson@agmkt.state.ny.us.*