



Farm Bill Conservation in Florida

Protect conservation funding for farmers, ranchers, and private landowners.

The Farm Bill provides **\$6 billion of annual funding** to voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs which help producers and private landowners understand and adopt conservation practices that improve wildlife habitat, soil health, water quality and quantity, resilience to climate change, and empower communities nationwide.

Learn more at
[ProtectAgConservation.com!](https://ProtectAgConservation.com)

- **In 2023, Florida received \$9 million in IRA funding.** IRA funding will increase multifold by 2026.
- Nationally, **53% of IRA applications were rejected due to insufficient federal funding** (2023)
- **Only 28% of Florida's applications to EQIP and CSP were successful** (2023)
- Less than 27% of applications were accepted nationwide (2023)



The Inflation Reduction Act Funds In-Demand Practices

The \$20 billion of climate-oriented funds provided by IRA will continue to fund practices in high demand in Florida and across the nation.

- **IRA funds 9 of Florida's top 15 practices used in 2022**
- In Florida, nearly **800,000 acres are eligible for 2024 IRA funding** (2022)

Top IRA Eligible Practices	2022 Acres
Prescribed Burning	400,673
Herbaceous Weed Control	193,800
Brush Management	83,365
Forest Stand Improvement	33,315
Tree/Shrub Establishment	25,416

74% of farmers agree: there should be more conservation funding, not less

- Nationally, NRCS received over **\$2.8 billion in applications for the available \$850 million** in 2023.
- NRCS rejected over 6,000 eligible applications to IRA funding, awarding 5,350 contracts.
- **Over 39 million acres are eligible for IRA funding in 2024**, based on 2022 practice funding
- Nationwide the top 5 practices, based on acreage, eligible for IRA funding are (1) prescribed grazing, (2) brush management, (3) forest stand improvement, (4) cover crops, and (5) prescribed burning.

NRCS Programs have provided \$141 million to Florida (2019-2023)

Florida	2019-2023 Funds	Contracts	Acres
Total	\$ 141,591,335	3,011	1,186,032
ACEP-ALE	\$ 13,962,245	15	7,804
CRP	\$ 4,604,170	-	11,388
CSP	\$ 20,550,455	404	440,829
EQIP	\$ 102,474,465	2,592	726,012

In Florida, NRCS has funded 3,011 contracts to implement practices on over 1.1 million acres (2019-2023). Over that time, NRCS obligated over \$17.3 billion through 215,543 contracts, implementing practices on over 117 million acres, nationally.

Cultivating Conservation in Florida

Farmers in Florida are using Farm Bill conservation programs to address conservation challenges and improve their operations.



High Tunnels Extend Production

(NRCS) In much of the USA high tunnels help farmers extend the growing season into the winter. In South Florida's tropical climate where vegetable production is highest during the milder winter months, high tunnels help farmers extend the growing season by controlling summer's excess heat, precipitation and humidity. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program can provide a share of the cost of installing a high tunnel system. The USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program has funded on-farm research to compare the costs and benefits of high tunnel systems for producing vegetables. Other SARE research has focused on soil health, cover crops, and mulches for weed control.

Supporting Farms and Wildlife

Bud Chiles grows organic blueberries at Jubilee Orchards, a 210-acre farm in Northern Florida. Over 125,000 blueberry bushes produce organic blueberries for a unique u-pick berry experience that includes nature activities, music and food. Good conservation and a host of pollinator plants on the farm also provide a home for gopher tortoises, bobcats, cockaded woodpeckers, deer, turkey, bees and other wildlife. Bud is also partner in Biochar Smart Climate Deal and was named one of Florida Trend's 500 Most Influential Business Leaders.

Protection for Future Generations

(NRCS) Carey Lightsey owns XL Ranch Lightsey Cove, a cattle ranch in the northern Everglades. A 527-acre part of the ranch features wet prairie, sand pine scrub, and rare cutthroat grasslands. Funds from the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program helped put a conservation easement on the property that will ensure this important part of the state-designated Florida Wildlife Corridor will remain undeveloped for future generations. The parcel is one of the most recent of over 200,000 acres of Florida farmland now protected by a conservation easement funded by the Farm Bill.

Streamlining Conservation

USDA's new Act Now initiative streamlines the conservation program for farmers. Florida farmers who seek USDA help to install high-priority conservation practices like brush management, planting cover crops, mulching, tree planting, and improving forest stands can get rapid approval as long as they meet minimum requirements.