



CRP in Baca County, Colorado

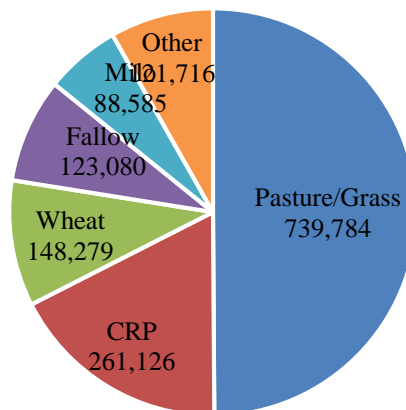
Even though half of the land in Baca County, Colorado, is dedicated to native pasture and grassland, the next largest chunk of land in the county is idled in the government's conservation program -- the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Although more than 267,000 acres of Baca County land was enrolled in the CRP in 2015, they only contributed about [\\$9 million](#) to the county's economy that year. The government paid \$34 for an acre in CRP in 2015, but an acre planted to wheat had the potential to generate \$455 of [economic activity](#) (including expenses and revenue).

Wheat farming alone contributed more than [\\$67 million](#) to the county's local economy in 2015. The majority of that economic activity -- about \$40 million -- came from the inputs and services that contribute to wheat production, including seed, fertilizer, labor, fuel, repairs and land rent.

Even though CRP acres contribute far less to the local economy, in 2016, 35 percent of the land in Baca County was idled in CRP.

Baca County CO Land Use in 2016 (In Acres)



The economic benefits of CRP are far below the benefits of agricultural production to the county, and to compound the economic harm, not all of the dollars paid for CRP acres head to Baca County. For example, in 2014, two of the top five [highest paid owners](#) of Baca County CRP acres were not local residents.

CRP's intended purpose is to pay farmers to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production. When whole farms are enrolled in CRP as in Baca County, the local economy suffers and productive farmland -- which could be enhanced with targeted conservation practices -- is wasted.

The NGFA advocates for conservation practices that improve the resources needed for an agricultural economy to thrive -- principally, soil and water. However, USDA data shows that a majority of the CRP acres in Baca County aren't maintained with practices that directly improve soil and water quality.



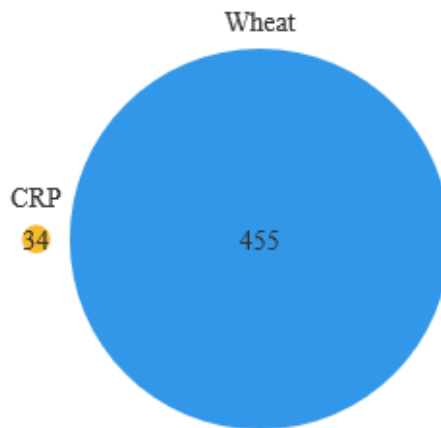
In fact, just [166 acres](#) of the county’s CRP land is being preserved with practices specific to water and soil quality improvement. The vast majority – a whopping 260,900 acres -- are idled primarily for wildlife habitat.

While restoring wildlife habitat is an important aspect of conservation, there are already several USDA programs assisting the practice, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Moreover, Baca County already dedicates 739,784 acres to native grassland.

If CRP operated as a program that truly targeted the most environmentally sensitive land, Baca County would be allowed to more fully reap the economic benefits of its productive farmland while also conserving natural resources.

View more information about the NGFA and CRP at <http://www.ngfa.org/farm-bill/>

Comparison of Baca County CO Direct Economic Activity for CRP vs. Wheat (\$/Acre)



***Information last updated January 25, 2017**

Table 1: Baca County Colorado: Population, CRP Acres, CRP Rents, and Cash Rents

Year	Population 1/	CRP Acres 2/	Avg. Gov't Paid CRP Rental Rate 2/	Avg. Farmer-Paid Cash Rental Rate 3/
1980	5,419	0	NA	NA
1990	4,556	254,440	\$38.78	NA
2000	4,517	263,142	\$25.49	NA
2010	3,788	261,449	\$25.21	\$26.00
2015	3,615	267,365	\$34.32	NA
2016		261,126	NA	\$22.00

1/ Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

2/ Source: USDA's Farm Service Agency.

3/ Source: USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This is the average rate paid by farmers to rent non-irrigated cropland.



Table 2: Baca County Colorado CRP Practices in 2016

Primary Focus on Soil Erosion & Water Quality	Acres
CP8 Grass Waterways	10
CP21 Filter Strips	156
Subtotal	166
Primary Focus on Wildlife or Other	Acres
CP2 Native Grass, Forb and Legume Establishment	87,228
CP4 Permanent Wildlife Habitat	2,101
CP4D Permanent Wildlife Habitat Noneasement	80,077
CP10 Veg Cover, Grass Already Est	80,380
CP25 Rare and Declining Habitat	156
CP33 Habitat Buffers Upland Birds	761
CP38E State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Grass	6,823
CP42 Pollinator Habitat	3,434
Subtotal	260,960
Total	261,126

Source: USDA's Farm Service Agency.

Table 3: Baca County Colorado Top CRP Payment Recipients in 2014

Rank	Residence of CRP Payment Recipient	CRP Payment
1	Local	\$311,340
2	Non-local	\$149,856
3	Local	\$93,180
4	Non-local	\$68,489
5	Local	\$68,033
6	Local	\$65,591
7	Local	\$65,059
8	Local	\$62,702
9	Local	\$57,585
10	Local	\$56,343



Table 4: Baca County Colorado Direct Economic Activity for Wheat in 2015

Item	Per Acre of Wheat 1/	Wheat Acres in Baca County 2/	Direct Economic Activity for Wheat
Wheat grain	\$167.06		
Silage/straw/grazing	\$15.18		
Total Value of Production	\$182.24	148,279	\$27,022,217
Seed	\$11.82		
Fertilizer	\$33.89		
Chemicals	\$8.66		
Custom operations	\$11.84		
Fuel, lube, and electricity	\$13.57		
Repairs	\$20.96		
Other variable expenses	\$0.07		
Interest on operating inputs	\$0.09		
Hired labor	\$1.79		
Opportunity cost of unpaid labor	\$19.19		
Capital recovery of machinery and equipment	\$81.07		
Opportunity cost of land (rental rate)	\$52.93		
Taxes and insurance	\$6.73		
General farm overhead	\$10.24		
Total Cost	\$272.85	148,279	\$40,457,925
Total Value of Production and Cost	\$455.09	148,279	\$67,480,142

1/ Source: USDA's Economic Research Service.

2/ Source: USDA's Farm Service Agency.

Table 5: Baca County Colorado Direct Economic Activity for CRP in 2015

Item	Per Acre 1/	CRP Acres 1/	Direct Economic Activity
CRP Payments	\$34.32	267,365	\$9,175,967

Source: USDA's Farm Service Agency.