



Program Description

The Ruminant Farmer Initiative (SRFI) is designed to improve technical service and program participation in all USDA programs through improved outreach efforts to small ruminant farmers. Ruminants are characterized by their “four” stomachs and “cud-chewing” behavior. The cud is a food bolus that has been regurgitated. There are about 150 different domestic and wild ruminant species including sheep, goats, and red deer.

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Mississippi Small Ruminant Farmer Initiative (SRFI)



Ruminant animals are further classified by foraging behavior: grazers, browsers, or intermediate grazers. Grazers, such as goats and sheep, consume mostly lower quality grasses while browsers such as deer stay in the woods and eat highly nutritious twigs and shrubs.

Eligible Land

Eligible land is pastureland / cut-over or abandoned areas as well as converted cropland. Incidental wooded areas are eligible when existing vegetation will support grazing /browsing animals. The target audience is defined as any small farm that meets the USDA definition that states a farm with less than \$250,000 a year in sales. To be eligible small ruminants must be owned by producer at the time of ranking application. Small ruminant species targeted for this program are sheep, goats, and red deer. Other species may be eligible based upon circumstances approved by the area office.



All applicants must be willing to follow a prescribed grazing plan.

2014 Historically-Underserved (HU) rate of compensation will be used when the participant has applied under SRFI and meets HU which are: Beginning Farmers (BF), Limited Resource Farmers, (LRF) and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers (SD) criteria. A higher rate of compensation is allowed.

2014 EQIP Base rate of compensation will be used when the participant has NOT met any of the HU criteria yet does meet SRFI guidelines.

The resource concerns addressed in Mississippi through the SRFI are:

(1) Surface Water Quality – runoff of nutrients and organics

(2) Soil Quality – erosion control above soil loss tolerance (T)

(3) Sustainable Forestry (Only applies when small ruminants are used to control vegetation in existing wooded areas)

ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION PRACTICE INFORMATION:

The following table lists conservation practices eligible for payment under the Small Ruminant Farmer Initiative (SRFI):

CONSERVATION PRACTICES ELIGIBLE FOR PAYMENT

- Nutrient Management Plan
- Grazing Management Plan – Written
- Integrated Pest Management Plan – Written
- Brush Management
- Prescribed Burning
- Critical Area Planting
- Sediment Basin
- Diversion
- Pond
- Fence
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Land Clearing
- Forage and Biomass Planting
- Pipeline
- Pumping Plant
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Stream Crossing
- Streambank and Shoreline Protection
- Watering Facility
- Water Well
- Early Successional Habitat Development and Management
- Livestock Shade Structure



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