

For Immediate Release

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*Applications Due by October 28, 2011*

## **FEDERAL AGENCY ANNOUNCES THE 2012 GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM**

ATHENS, GA, September 28, 2011—James E. Tillman, Sr., State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Georgia today announced that the NRCS is accepting applications for financial assistance through the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). Although this is a continuous sign-up program, applications must be received by October 28, 2011 in order to be considered for funding during fiscal year 2012.

The GRP is a voluntary program that assists landowners and operators in restoring and protecting grasslands through permanent conservation easements and multi-year rental contracts, while maintaining the areas in their grassland use. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations; maintaining and improving plant and animal biodiversity; and protection of grasslands and shrub-lands from the threat of conversion to uses other than grazing.

Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices; produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under Federal or State law); conduct fire rehabilitation; and construct firebreaks and fences. As a minimum conservation planning will address soil, water, air, plants, animals and human resource concerns.

To apply for the GRP, contact your local USDA Service Center located in the phone book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, or access this Web site: <http://offices.usda.gov> to locate your local office. Additional information about this and other programs is also available at: [www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/programs).

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