

NB_300_9_26, Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Contract Modification to Extend Expiration Dates for 3 or 5 Years

National Bulletin: 300-9-26

Date: July 30, 2009

Subject: LTP - Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Contract Modification to Extend Expiration Dates for 3 or 5 Years

Purpose. To provide instruction and guidance for carrying out CRP contract modifications to extend expiration dates under the current technical assistance (TA) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

Expiration Date. September 30, 2009

Background. On May 1, Secretary Vilsack announced that USDA's FSA will offer certain CRP participants the opportunity to modify and extend their CRP contracts, which are scheduled to expire on September 30, 2009. CRP contracts that are scheduled to expire on September 30, 2009, may modify all or part of that contract to extend the expiration date for a period of 3 or 5 years at the same per-acre payment rate. No general CRP sign-up is scheduled during FY 2009.

USDA can only extend approximately 1.5 million acres out of a total 3.9 million acres expiring this year. This extension will ensure that FSA meets the statutory CRP acreage limitation of 32 million acres. Not all contracts can be extended. The Environmental Benefit Index (EBI) score that was used at the time the land was enrolled or the Erodibility Index (EI) on land with an EI of 15 or greater will be used to identify contracts eligible for extension.

In May 2009, FSA issued Notice CRP-634, "2009 CRP Contract Modifications to Extend Expiration Dates for 3 or 5 Years and Policy for Early Land Preparation," to all States. Section 2A of the notice provides that participants wishing to extend the expiration date for 3 or 5 years must obtain a modified conservation plan (see Attachment A).

Under the current MOA between NRCS, FSA, and CCC, NRCS has the following responsibilities:

To carry out the tasks for the TA implementation of CRP, including new general and continuous enrollments, reenrollments and extensions for general sign-up, and reenrollments for continuous sign-up.

To revise the extended expiration dates (by making pen and ink changes) and sign conservation plans, provided the TA was originally performed by NRCS and not a technical service provider (TSP).

Explanation. TA funding for tasks associated with the 2009 CRP contract modifications to extend expiration dates for 3 or 5 years is included in the existing MOA. No additional TA will be provided.

CRP participants with contracts that are expiring on September 30, 2009, and will not be extended may offer the land for reenrollment under continuous sign-up criteria, provided all other eligibility requirements are met.

Producers should be informed of other USDA, NRCS, and FSA conservation programs that may assist the producer's transition to agricultural production systems that will protect natural resources. Conservation planning work performed on contracts that are coming out of CRP must be charged to the appropriate program. For conservation planning guidance on land coming out of CRP, see [National Bulletin 180-9-3 Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\) Endangered Species Act Responsibilities for Expiring Conservation Reserve Program Contracts and Sodbusted Lands](#), dated June 12, 2009, and Circular No. 3 Part 512, dated July 20, 2009.

See Attachment B for the national projection of expiring acres, potential acres of extended expirations, and acres potentially coming out of the CRP.

Specific NRCS responsibilities for new general and continuous enrollments, reenrollments and extensions for general sign-up and reenrollments for continuous sign-up CRP include carrying out the tasks for the TA implementation. NRCS also has responsibility for revising the extended expiration dates by making pen and ink changes and signing conservation plans, provided the TA was originally performed by NRCS and not a

TSP.

Contact. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the National CRP Program Manager, at (202) 720-1836.

/s/

LINCOLN E. BURTON
Acting Deputy Chief for Programs

[Attachment A - FSA's Notice CRP-634](#)
[Attachment B - 2009 Expiring Acres](#)