

Minimal Effect Determinations Fact Sheet

Definition

Minimal effect is a determination that the conversion or proposed conversion action of a wetland will have an insignificant effect on the hydrologic and biologic functions and values of the wetland.

Purpose

The wetland conservation provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill allow landowners to produce agricultural commodities even if their actions involve converting a wetland, as long as there is only a minor impact on the functions and values of the landowner's wetland and other wetlands in the area. A minimal effect determination provides landowners with information that is useful in making decisions about wetlands conversion that relate to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm program eligibility.

USDA Program Eligibility

A landowner will maintain USDA farm program eligibility for actions associated with the conversion of a wetland or the production of an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland if the action will have a minimal effect on the hydrologic and biologic functions of the wetlands in the area.

Categorical Minimal Effect Determinations

A list of activities and practices that have minimal effect on wetland functions for the local area have been developed. Categorical minimal effect exemptions enable landowners to conduct these activities with immediate approval while maintaining eligibility for USDA programs. A list of categorical minimal effect activities and practices will be available in the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

Applying for a Minimal Effect Determination

USDA has personnel trained in conducting minimal effect determinations. The landowner may request a conservationist to visit the wetland, discuss the proposed action, and determine if effects are minimal.

For More Information

NRCS, [Farm Service Agency](#), [Cooperative Extension Service](#), or your local [conservation district](#) can provide more information. Your USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture. Information is also available here on [NRCS's World Wide Web site](#).

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