



## Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) MISSISSIPPI

### **Q: What is the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)?**

- A:** GRP is a voluntary program established to:
- Help landowners and operators protect eligible grazing lands, pastureland, and certain other lands;
  - Emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development, and other activities.



### **Q: What are the land eligibility requirements for GRP?**

- A:** To be eligible for enrollment, land must be private or Tribal grassland in Mississippi which includes pastureland (including improved pastureland) and certain other lands that must:
- Be part of a viable grazing operation,
  - Be under the threat of conversion to uses other than grazing, and
  - Have plant and animal biodiversity.



### **Q: What counties in Mississippi is GRP offered?**

- A:** The program is offered in all 82 counties.

### **Q: What is the requirement on length of ownership to apply for GRP?**

- A:** There is no ownership length provision.

### **Q: What are the benefits to GRP?**

- A:** Participant's who enroll in GRP voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the grazing land in exchange for program payments.

### **Q: How do landowners apply for the program?**

- A:** Landowners may obtain GRP applications at their local USDA Service Center NRCS office or conservation district office. GRP has a continuous signup, but all applications meeting the eligibility requirements that have been submitted by close of business on May 31, 2013, will be ranked and considered for 2013 funding.



**Q: Is there a minimum acreage requirement to apply for GRP?**

**A:** No, but applications that have been in grazing operations and need no restoration work will be given the highest priority. Also, priority will be given for:

- Urban threat;
- Cultivation threat;
- Threat of reforestation in the Jackson Prairie;
- Biodiversity;
- Location significance – offered area is located in Blackland Prairie or Jackson Prairie;
- Adjacent to other protected lands; and
- Management.



**Q: What enrollment option do I have in Mississippi for 2013?**

**A:** Rental contracts for which annual payments are based on the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value. The participants may choose one of the following rental contracts:

- (1) 10 years
- (2) 15 years
- (3) 20 years



**Q: Who controls access to land enrolled in GRP?**

**A:** The landowner retains complete control of access. However, NRCS retains access rights to the GRP area for the purposes of monitoring and enforcing the rental contracts.

**Q: How are applications selected for GRP?**

**A:** Applications are selected according to criteria developed at the national and state level within broad national guidelines.





**Q: How do you determine landowner eligibility for GRP?**

**A:** Landowner provides the necessary information at signup for NRCS and FSA to determine if the landowner is eligible to participate including:

- Copy of the deed or evidence that applicant has control of the eligible land under consideration for the intended contract period;
- If an entity –
  - (1) proof that entity is a legal and valid entity in the state, usually a certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State.
  - (2) documents indicating who has authority to sign contractual arrangements for the entity.
  - (3) proof the Farm Service Agency (FSA) has been provided a list of entity members and membership shares.
- The Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provision of the 2008 Farm Bill must be met; and
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the Farm Bill;



**Q: If enrolled in GRP, do I retain my rights to the land?**

**A:** Yes, GRP participants retain the right to use the land to conduct common grazing practices that are detailed in an NRCS grazing management plan.

**Q: If enrolled in GRP, are there any prohibited activities?**

**A:** Yes, GRP rental contracts prohibit the production of crops, fruit trees, vineyards or other agricultural commodities and other activities inconsistent with maintaining grazing uses and related conservation values.





**Q: Is land eligible if it is currently enrolled in another conservation program?**

**A:** Only land enrolled in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP – grassland only that will expire in the next 12 months are eligible for GRP). All land currently enrolled in other conservation programs that protect grazing uses, or is already protected by an existing easement, contract or deed restriction or is owned by a conservation organization is not eligible for GRP.



**Q: Does land enrolled in the GRP have to have a grazing management plan?**

**A:** Yes, a grazing management plan is required for all GRP rental contracts. A grazing management plan addresses resource concerns on land where grazing related activities or practices are planned and applied. The plan will include any restrictions to haying, mowing, or harvesting for seed production during the nesting season for grassland birds in the local area that are in significant decline.



**Q: If enrolled in GRP, are participants allowed to keep Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) Base Acres?**

**A:** No, rental contract participants are required to suspend any existing cropland base on land in GRP contracts.



**Q: What agency administrates GRP?**

**A:** Administration of GRP is a coordinated effort between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). NRCS is the lead agency responsible for technical assistance and regulatory compliance while FSA has the lead responsibility for the administration of the rental contracts and financial activities of the program.

**Q: Are there any payment limitations on rental contracts?**

**A:** Yes, the 2008 Farm Bill limits annual payments for rental contracts to a maximum of \$50,000 per person or legal entity per year.



**Q: Who determines rental rates for GRP?**

**A:** USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA).

**Q: Is there a web page for more information?**

**A:** Yes, NRCS Web sites are at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/grassland/>  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ms/programs/easements/grassland/>

