FACT SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

February 2013

Conservation Reserve Program, General Sign-Up 45, May 20 through June 14, 2013

Overview

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will hold a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up from May 20 - June 14, 2013.

CRP is a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 to 15 years. Accepted contracts for CRP sign-up 45 will begin Oct. 1, 2013.

FSA administers CRP, while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program."

Submitting CRP Offers

Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during CRP sign-up 45. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on Sept. 30, 2013, may submit offers.

To submit CRP offers, producers must visit their local FSA office. FSA will accept offers only during the sign-up period. To find a local FSA office, visit the USDA website at http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app.

Eligible Producers

To be eligible for CRP enrollment, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the end of the CRP sign-up period, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law or;
- The circumstance of the acquisition presents adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

Eligible Land

To be eligible for placement in the CRP general sign-up, land must be cropland (including field margins) that is planted, or considered planted, to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002 to 2007, and be physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Alfalfa or other multi-year grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for CRP sign-up 45.

Additional Cropland Requirements

In addition to the eligible land requirements for the CRP general sign-up, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher;
- Be expiring CRP acreage or;
- Be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area.

CRP Payments

FSA provides CRP sign-up 45 participants with annual rental payments, including certain incentive payments and cost-share assistance.

- Rental Payments

In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent. County office staff working with the producer will calculate the maximum CRP rental rate for each offer prior to enrollment. Producers may offer land below the rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

- Cost-Share Assistance

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance cannot exceed 50 percent of the participant's costs to establish approved practices.

Ranking CRP Offers

FSA will rank offers for CRP sign-up 45 according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data (primarily based on location, soils information and selected conservation practice) and determines the environmental indices for the land offered.

FSA ranks each eligible offer in comparison to all other offers and selects from that ranking. After the sign-up ends, the Secretary of Agriculture will decide where to make the EBI cutoff. Those who have met previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up. Producers may consult with local FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) staff on how to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

More information on EBI for CRP sign-up 45 is available by reading the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program Sign-up 45, Environmental Benefits Index."

CRP Continuous Sign-Up

In addition to CRP sign-up 45, producers at any time, when authorized,can participate in CRP continuous sign-up, in which producers can enroll the most environmentally sensitive land.

More information on CRP continuous sign-up is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-Up" located at www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crp_sign_up_2013.pdf

For More Information

For more information on CRP, contact a local FSA office, or visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

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