

Minnesota State Technical Meeting

Conservation Update

July 11, 2013

1. Conservation Authorities

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extended the authorities for FSA to administer conservation programs until September 30, 2013.

County Offices received authorization to begin accepting offers for CCRP Signup (SU) 44 on May 13, 2013. General CRP SU 45 was announce for the period of May 20th – June 14th, 2013. The CCRP signup ran simultaneously with CRP General SU 45.

CCRP signup eligibility includes all environmental sensitive conservation practices such as Field Windbreaks (CP5A), Grass Filter Strips (CP21), Riparian Buffers (CP22), etc., along with all State initiative practices such as Farmable Wetland Programs (FWP), Duck Nesting Habitat (CP37) Wetland Restorations (CP23 and CP23A) and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

2. General CRP Signup 45

- a. With the authorization for enrollment of many farm program sign-ups this spring, FSA has been extremely busy this last month.
- b. General SU45 was conducted in a 4-week signup period.
- c. FSA migrated producer farm record maintenance to the new web-based software called MIDAS.
- d. Software issues with MIDAS resulted in many delays of SU45 offers if the landowner/operator requested any type of farm records change.
- e. An extension for the SU45 deadline was not authorized; therefore, producers who were unable to submit offers by Close of Business (COB) on June 14, 2013, were placed on registers. The registers provided County Offices with the authorization to process the offer up to June 28, 2013.
- f. All offers still pending on the SU45 register after June 28, 2013, due to software issues, will be calculated after the release of the National list of accepted and rejected offers.
- g. No numbers for submitted offers can be released.
- h. MN –
 - i. Most County Offices were steady with producer traffic throughout the signup with the exception of a few Counties that reported heavy traffic throughout.
 - ii. Last week was slower for most counties, with the exception of a few in the Northwest.
- i. Anticipate accepted/rejected list in the next couple of weeks.
- j. Once national list is released, County Offices will need to contact producers.

3. Continuous CRP Signup 44

- a. Lots of interest in CCRP.
- b. Counties have been extremely busy processing offers for SU44.
- c. Reasons for Interest:
 - i. Additional dollars in incentives.
 - ii. No CAP on maximum payment rate. SU45 had a maximum CAP of \$240/acre.
- d. With additional State initiative acres, more opportunity for enrolling or re-enrolling expiring acres into CCRP.

4. Acreage Allocation for Minnesota Continuous (CCRP) Initiative Practices

Currently, Minnesota has 396,681 acres enrolled in CCRP including Farmable Wetland Practice (FWP) and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

Current Minnesota CCRP Initiative Allocations Available:

Practice	Description	Total State Allocation	Acreage Available
CP23	Wetland Restoration, Floodplain	45,000.0	19,025.2
CP23A	Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain	112,094.0	13,729.0
CP31	Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands	2,000.0	1,403.6
CP33	Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds	1,100.0	619.2
CP37	Duck Nesting Habitat	18,304.0	8,605.2
FWP	Farmable Wetland Program	100,000.0	48,755.5
SAFE	State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement	48,700.0	11,696.5
HELI	Highly Erodible Land Initiative	11,200.0	11,166.8

5. CRP – FY13 Expiring acreages

Currently, MN has approximately 1.4 million acres under CRP/CREP/CCRP/FWP contracts.

The breakdown for 9/30/2013 expiring contracts is as such:

GENERAL SIGNUP		CONTINUOUS SIGNUP		TOTAL	
ACRES	NUMBER	ACRES	NUMBER	ACRES	NUMBER
113,402	2,787	15,680	2,059	129,082	4,846

6. Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

GRP provides assistance to landowners and operators to protect grazing uses and related conservation values on eligible private range and pasture lands. The program emphasizes support of grazing operations, maintaining and improving plant and animal biodiversity and protecting grasslands and shrublands under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development and other non-grazing uses.

NRCS has received the 2013 GRP apportionment of which Minnesota received \$216,000 for rental agreements. GRP rental rates are based on the marginal pastureland rates used for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). GRP is a continuous sign up program. NRCS in coordination with FSA establish cut off periods to rank and select applications.

Currently, NRCS and FSA are accepting applications for GRP. The Signup began on July 1, 2013 and will end on Wednesday, July 17, 2013. Rental Agreements can be submitted for a period of 10, 15 or 20 years.

Interested producers should contact their local NRCS or FSA to complete an application.