



Consideration of Native Seed Mixes & Producer CRP Offers

About

When making an offer for Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), it's important to understand the advantages and disadvantages of certain mixes. FSA calculates Environmental Benefit Index (EBI), which is used to rank CRP offers nationally. The EBI gives additional weight to producers doing native grasses as opposed to introduced species. The EBI also considers the seed mixes themselves. While a 50 point native seed mix does offer a competitive advantage initially, keeping the planting in compliance with FSA's policies is critical to maintaining a CRP contract without additional expense or having to pay any money received back to FSA.

Producers should consider conditions present in the fields they offer for CRP at the time of application. For example: if a field is weed free and coming out of a commodity crop, planting preparation and weed competition will be more favorable for planting natives. However, if these fields are presently weedy or populated with introduced grasses, the success of a native grass planting will be more challenging. Native species typically have weak seedling vigor which can impact successful establishment.

50-point CP2 Cover

- ♦ Five species native mix (grasses, forbs, shrubs or legumes):
 - Three native grasses.
 - One forb/legume/shrub.
 - The fifth species can be native grass, forb, shrub, or legume.
- ♦ All five species must be certified as established 2 years after planting.
- ♦ All five species must be present at the end of 10-year contract.
- ♦ Additional money for planting to bring non-compliant CRP plantings up to compliance is not guaranteed by FSA.
- ♦ If cover is not established according to requirements: FSA may terminate the contract and require the producer to pay back any received program dollars.

20-point CP2 Cover

- ♦ Three species native mix (grasses, forbs, shrubs or legumes):
 - Two native grasses.
 - One forb/shrub/legume.
- ♦ All three species must be certified as established 2 years after planting.
- ♦ All three species must be present at the end of 10-year contract.
- ♦ Lower requirements for species numbers could be favorable to drier climates.
- ♦ Easier to meet and maintain CRP diversity requirements.

