USDA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

CONSERVATION

FACT SHEET

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Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Grasslands

OVERVIEW

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands is part of the Conservation Reserve Program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is protected and used for conservation benefits.

With CRP, participants establish or maintain long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance during the duration of the contract period.

With CRP Grasslands, landowners and operators can protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. Participants receive annual payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 14 and 15 years.

CRP Grasslands is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) FSA administers the program on behalf of the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

BENEFITS

Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations and improves environmental quality.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under federal or state law), conduct fire rehabilitation and construct firebreaks and fences.

RANKING LAND OFFERED FOR CRP GRASSLANDS

Interested participants may file applications with the USDA FSA at any time. These applications will be batched and reviewed at least once a year to determine which applications can be approved using Grassland Ranking Factors. FSA collects data for each of the ranking factors based on the relative benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from that ranking.

FSA uses the following ranking factors, including:

- Existence of expiring CRP or Grassland Reserve Program land;
- Existing grassland;
- Multi-species cover existence and predominance of native species;
- Livestock grazing operation;
- State Focus Area (land-based) determined in consultation with State Technical Committee; and
- Whether the applicant is an eligible new, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.

SMALL LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS

Small livestock operations will be ranked against other small operations. Small livestock operations with 100 or fewer grazing dairy cows or equivalent can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres per operation.

Animal Kind/Class	Animal Unit Equivalent
Beef/Buffalo/Dry Dairy Cow	1.00
Dairy Cow	1.40
Beef/Dairy/Buffalo Bulls	1.50
Calf	0.30
Heifer	0.86
Yearling Cattle	0.65

Sheep, Ewe	0.16
Lamb, Weaned to Yearling	0.14
Ram (200 lbs.)	0.17
Goat, mature	0.15
Kid, yearling	0.10
Llama	0.23

ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to closing the CRP enrollment 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 circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

ELIGIBLE LAND

Land currently must be planted to a grass cover.

RENTAL PAYMENTS

In return for following an approved CRP conservation plan, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value of the land covered by the agreement as determined by FSA for the life of the agreement.

COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved practices on eligible land in an amount that is not more than 50 percent of the participants' costs in establishing approved practices.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other restrictions may apply. To find more information about CRP Grasslands, visit **www.fsa.usda.gov/crp**. For more details on FSA conservation programs, visit **www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation** or contact your local FSA office. To locate the nearest FSA office or USDA service center, visit **http://offices.usda.gov**.

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1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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