

News Release

For Immediate Release

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FSA Announces Critical Feed Program

Bozeman, MT – The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced the authorization of certain acreage enrolled under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to be available for haying and grazing after the **primary nesting season ends which is August 1st in Montana**. No rental payment reduction will be assessed on contracts being utilized for the critical feed use. However, a \$75 fee will be charged per contract to process the contract modification. The fee must be paid prior to the local FSA county committee approving the contract modification. The fee is not refundable.

Beginning June 2, 2008, eligible CRP participants may sign up for the critical feed use practice at their local FSA office. Participants must submit a modification to their conservation plan. This modification for critical feed use is only for 2008. All haying and grazing must be completed no later than November 10, 2008. The critical feed use practice may be used on CRP acreage that was hayed or grazed in 2007 either under the Managed Haying and Grazing provisions or the Emergency Haying or Grazing provisions.

CRP participants may use their CRP acreage for haying or grazing or may lease the privilege to any other individual. CRP participants may not hay and graze the same acreage. CRP participants must leave at least 50 percent of each field unhayed. Only one cutting of hay is permitted. CRP participants wishing to graze their CRP acreage must leave at least 25 percent of each field ungrazed for wildlife or graze all of the CRP acreage at no more than 75 percent of the stocking rate as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or a Technical Service Provider (TSP).

Eligible acreage includes acreage devoted to: 1) CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes; 2) CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses; 3) CP4B, Permanent Wildlife Habitat – Corridors; 4) CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat; 5) CP10, Vegetative Cover – Grass – Already Established; 6) CP18B, Establishment of Permanent Vegetation to Reduce Salinity; 7) CP18C, Establishment of Permanent Salt Tolerant Vegetative Cover. Acreage is eligible 12 months after the cover is fully established.

Prices for most field crops have advanced to record or near record levels in recent months, reflecting strong demand, tight supplies and competition for acres. The increased demand for commodities and resulting higher prices has impacted the livestock industry in particular. The critical feed practice will provide much needed feed and forage while maintaining the conservation benefits of the CRP program.

For further information on the critical feed practice, logon to the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt> or contact your local FSA office.

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