



FACT SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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Conservation Reserve Program Field Borders

Overview

Agricultural producers can now profit from helping Washington's upland birds. Washington has been authorized to enroll up to 5,000 acres of land in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field borders to provide habitat for upland birds. Species that could benefit from field borders include gamebirds such as chukar and ring-necked pheasant; songbirds such as meadowlarks and grasshopper sparrows; and sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse.

Signup for the program is year round and is non-competitive, unlike the general CRP application process. Offers will be enrolled on a first come, first served basis so long as acreage is available. Enrollment is limited to cropland with annual cropping history during 2002-2007, or expiring CRP. Land may only be offered in counties that do not exceed the CRP county acreage cap.

Check with local Farm Service Agency staff regarding the status of county CRP acres.

Landowner Benefits

As with general CRP contracts, landowners enter into a 10-year contract and receive annual rental payments. Annual rental payments are based on the full calculated CRP rental rate for the enrolled land. Bidding down is not necessary to make an offer competitive as sometimes occurs with the general CRP signup. In addition, payments include:

- Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) equal to \$150/acre paid at the time of contract approval,
- 50% cost share to install the required grass/forb cover, and
- 40% Practice Incentive Payment (PIP), paid after all cover installation activity is complete, to provide a total of 90% reimbursement for cover installation costs.

Rental, SIP and PIP payments are subject to the normal CRP \$50,000 payment limitation along with all other CRP enrollments.

Landowners may experience non-financial benefits as well. Field borders can buffer adjacent areas from farming activity in the enclosed crop field.

Field and Field Border Requirements

Once FSA determines producer and land eligibility, a landowner can proceed with contract development, which involves a conservation plan from the Natural Resources Conservation Service or Conservation District. The following requirements apply when considering land to enter into the program:

- Field borders must generally be located around the entire perimeter of the field, but at a minimum along the edges where runoff enters or leaves the field.

- Field borders must have a minimum average width of 30 feet and cannot exceed a maximum average width of 120 feet.
- Travel lanes to enter and leave the field will not be enrolled.
- Fields of less than 5 acres are not eligible.

Use of Field Borders

FSA and NRCS refer to field borders enrolled in this program as conservation practice (CP) 33. The following are some restrictions and uses of the field borders:

- The CP33 practice cannot be used as a border around CRP or other perennial crops. It also cannot be used adjacent to other CRP buffers such

as waterways, grass filter strips or riparian buffers.

- The field border will be planted to a diversified mix, which usually includes three grasses and three broadleaf species.
- Field borders cannot be used as turn rows while farming the enclosed field.
- Periodic management activities will be required to maintain the vigor and diversity of the stand.

Binding Contract on Participants and Successors

CRP contracts are a 10-year binding agreement on the participants. Withdrawing from a CRP contract during this period will generally require the refund of all payments received. In

addition, if the land is sold or transferred, the successor must agree to assume the contract or all payments must be refunded. Applications should discuss their long term obligations with FSA staff before signing a CRP contract.

For More Information

For more information about CRP field borders, contact your local FSA office. After an application is submitted, a no-obligation eligibility review will be conducted and you will be provided a final opportunity to decide if you want to enroll the land.

Also visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wa.

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