

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
100 USDA, Suite 102
Stillwater, OK 74074-2653

OK Notice CRP-552

For: County Offices

CRP General Signup 26 Questions and Answers #1

Approved by: State Executive Director



1 Overview

A Purpose

This notice provides questions and answers in Exhibit 1 concerning CRP General Signup 26.

2 CRP Questions and Answers

A Exhibit 1 Questions and Answers

Exhibit 1 provides questions and answers that have originated from county office calls concerning CRP General Signup 26. This information shall be utilized in conjunction with other General Signup 26 notices and handbook 2-CRP (Rev. 4) to conduct General Signup 26.

B Handbook References

All paragraph references in Exhibit 1 are contained in 2-CRP (Rev. 4).

Disposal Date:
December 1, 2003

Distribution:
County Offices

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q1 Do you use the years 1997 to 2002 for cropland eligibility purposes?
- A No. Eligible cropland includes cropland that was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during four of the six crop years 1996-2001. This is statutory for the life of the farm bill.
- Q2 I have an offer that the operator is the owner so I only listed the producer in the owner area of the AGSS software. When I try to print the CRP-2, it does not show the producer listed under name and address of producer.
- A Item 4B of the CRP-2 is being filled by the operator information. You will need to list the owner under operator in the AGSS to get the owner's name to print on the CRP-2.
- Q3 When entering the predominant soils in the AGSS, there were only two soils for the offered acres. The offered acres were 92 and the two soils total is 88.7. The system would not accept this.
- A The AGSS recognizes that if there are only two soils on the offered acreage, that the total of these soils must equal the total offered acres. If you entered three, then the system realizes that there may be more than three soils and will accept a lesser amount of acres for the predominant soils than the total offered acres.
- Q4 Training material states expiring CRP 9-30-03 is eligible without the EI of 8 requirement. What about the contracts expiring 9-30-04. Are they eligible without meeting the EI requirement?
- A Expiring contracts, 2003 or 2004, are eligible without meeting the EI requirement.
- Q5 CRP acres that expired in 1999 that now have trees growing on them are not eligible if it would be impossible to plow. If the trees were planted on the acres in past years, would these farms be eligible?
- A Expired 1999 CRP contract acreage that have trees, even if planted, would be ineligible for CRP if the land cannot be farmed in a normal manner with normal farming equipment.
- Q6 If a county is listed on the MLRA as 78C, can any producer in the county qualify for CP25? Looks to me like a producer could apply for either CP2 or CP25 with CP25 more enticing since it provides for more points?
- A Your assessment is correct. Just be aware of what native plantings are to be used in the CP25 from the 643 standard. If there were no plants of concern to be in the mix, then CP25 would be good.

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

- Q7 What is the difference between the 8-digit HUC codes and the 11 and 14 digit HUC codes? We have all three listed on the map downloaded from the Zone Mapping tool.
- A HUCs are used mainly in the internal calculations for water and air quality factors that you do not see. It has to do with distance to populations. The 8 digit HUC is used for this purpose. An 8-digit HUC is more general and covers a larger area. The 11 or 14 digit HUCs are more specific and utilized in this signup to identify CPAs, wildlife, and water quality zones. Your dropdown screen on the AGSS will probably only have 8 digit HUCs except for those specific ones in counties with priority areas identified by a HUC.
- Q8 Is there a requirement for entering the CPA number?
- A There is no such thing as a CPA number. The AGSS system knows from its database by HUC or physical location that the land is in a CPA.
- Q9 On the required management practices for mowing or burning, does every approved contract participant have to burn or mow in the years specified or is that only if they take the C/S component?
- If a producer chooses to use the haying or grazing option and chooses to use the management practice of mowing, can they kill two birds with one stone?
- A The fact that a producer does or does not receive cost share does not have an impact on the required management cost share. The required management receives cost share no matter what. The CPOs for the new contracts for Signup 26 and later will state the required management practices and the years to be done. This must be contracted to hold the producer to these required management practices. If a producer does hay or graze under managed or even emergency provisions, this activity may negate the need for one year of the required management activity if the intent of the required management activity is essentially accomplished. This will be determined possibly by FSA, the TSP or NRCS.
- Q10 EI rounding – if the three predominant soils on a tract compute out to an EI of 7.85, do we round them up to 8 and the tract becomes eligible? Will AGSS take care of this?
- A The AGSS is figuring the EI.
- Q11 If a producer elects to use a TSP for his plan, do you know what costs are involved if any? Can the producer receive cost share if TSP is used?
- A No information on this yet.
- Q12 If there is not a 578 certification for one of the years 1996-2001, can a late certification be made with no charge?
- A Yes, see par. 195 of 2-CRP (Rev. 4)

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

- Q13 A producer has to sign a CCC-505 Base Reduction. Is this a permanent reduction or will they get base acres back after the ten years?
- A The base reduction can be considered permanent but we do not know what the next farm bill will do.
- Q14 Can a producer put a pond on the offered acres for wildlife at their own expense and get the 20 points for water development?
- A Yes, the pond would have to be built within the timeframe set to establish the permanent cover.
- Q15 According to the CRP training manual, a producer cannot enroll land under EQIP in CRP.
- A If the producer has established the cover under EQIP and received cost share, the land is not eligible. If the land is scheduled for a cover with EQIP cost share and not planted, the producer may amend the EQIP contract if allowed by NRCS and remove the land from EQIP and offer it for CRP. This can actually happen after he makes an offer. In other words, the land can be under an EQIP contract and not planted and offered and if accepted then the producer could get NRCS to remove it.
- Q16 Grass was planted on cropland in 1997 under the EQIP. Since this land meets the cropping history and EI of 8, can it be offered for CRP?
- A No. Land established to a permanent cover under EQIP and remains under a practice life span is ineligible to be offered (subparagraph 97 D).
- Q17 In the above situation, if the producer repays the EQIP cost share, would the land be eligible for CRP?
- A No. Refunding cost share shall not make the land eligible.
- Q18 How can an interested person become TSP certified? Is there training available or schools he could attend?
- A The interested person would need to visit the web site, <http://techreg.usda.gov/>, or contact the NRCS State Office.
- Q19 Is there a payment reduction for managed haying or grazing on CRP?
- A Yes – 25% of the annual rental payment for the acres hayed or grazed. (subparagraph 293 A)
- Q20 May I sell the hay or lease the acreage for a price under managed haying and grazing provisions?
- A Yes, subparagraph 293 A.

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

- Q21 Do I enter ineligible offers in the AGSS?
- A Yes, see notice CRP-434, subparagraph 9D.
- Q22 Handbook 2-CRP (Rev. 4), paragraph 97 explains the cropping history requirements. Has credit for conserving use provisions changed since CRP training? We thought that any grass on cropland would be eligible for CRP.
- A Yes. The definition of conserving use credit changed significantly in paragraph 97. In order for any alfalfa or other multi-year grasses or legumes to be considered planted for cropping history, they must have been “planted” during the period 1996 through 2001. Old grasses on cropland that we discussed during training, that were potentially eligible, are now not eligible with this definition. To simplify, any grass or legume planted before 1996 is not eligible for CRP cropping history.
- Q23 What about CRP grass? It was planted in many cases before 1996. Does CRP grass receive cropping history credit?
- A Cropland enrolled in CRP is considered planted during the term of the CRP-1. Acreage previously enrolled in CRP maintains the cropping history earned while under CRP-1. A CRP contract that expired or was terminated in 1998 and remaining in grass would not be eligible for CRP due to only having a three-year cropping history. If the CRP-1 expired or was terminated in 1999, there would be four years cropping, and the land would be eligible for CRP.
- Q24 A producer voluntarily terminated his CRP contract in 1999 and the COC terminated a CRP contract in 2000 due to non-compliance. Are the terminated CRP acres eligible to be offered for CRP Signup 26?
- A Yes. There is no provision that terminated acres are not eligible for offer and each have the four of six year crop history for 1996-2001.
- Q25 What are some examples of the paragraph 97 cropping histories that are eligible and ineligible?

Scenario 1

Grass planted on cropland in 1986
 1996-----grass
 1997-----grass
 1998----- grass
 1999----- grass
 2000----- grass
 2001----- grass

Determination: ineligible – grass was not planted in 1996-2001

Scenario 2

New land broke out in 1996
 and re-established to grass in 1997
 1996----- grass
 1997----- grass
 1998----- grass
 1999----- grass
 2000----- grass
 2001----- grass

Determination: The land does not meet the definition of cropland as outlined in 1-CM. Land is not eligible.

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

Q25 (continued)

Scenario 3

Cropland was put to grass in 1974 and is carried on COF records as cropland. The grass was tilled and replanted to grass in 1998.

1996----- grass
 1997----- grass
 1998----- replanted new grass
 1999----- new grass
 2000----- new grass
 2001----- new grass

Determination: Eligible. Grass was planted on cropland in the period 1996-2001 and 4 of 6 year history met.

Scenario 5

CRP-1 land expired in 1998 and remains in grass today.

1996-----CRP
 1997-----CRP
 1998-----grass
 1999-----grass
 2000-----grass
 2001-----grass

Determination: Ineligible only 3 years cropping. Land maintains cropping history for the period under CRP-1.

Scenario 7

CRP-1 land was voluntarily terminated from CRP in 1997. The producer prepared land for wheat and planted wheat in 2000 and 2001.

1996-----CRP
 1997-----CRP
 1998-----grass
 1999-----grass
 2000-----wheat
 2001-----wheat

Determination: Eligible. The land has a 4 of 6 cropping history 1996-2001.

Scenario 4

CRP land expired in 1999 and remains in grass today.

1996-----CRP
 1997-----CRP
 1998-----CRP
 1999-----CRP
 2000-----grass
 2001-----grass

Determination: Eligible. Land maintains cropping history for the period under CRP-1.

Scenario 6

The COC terminated land in CRP for non-compliance in 1999. Land remained in grass.

1996-----CRP
 1997-----CRP
 1998-----CRP
 1999-----CRP
 2000-----grass
 2001-----grass

Determination: Eligible. The fact the land was terminated does not affect eligibility and maintains cropping history while under CRP-1.

Scenario 8

Land was in wheat then planted to grass in 1998.

1996-----wheat
 1997-----wheat
 1998-----grass planted
 1999-----grass
 2000-----grass
 2001-----grass

Determination: Eligible. Meets the 4 of 6 cropping history 1996-2001.

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

Q25 (continued)

Scenario 9

Land was fallow.
 1996-----fallow
 1997-----fallow
 1998-----fallow
 1999-----fallow
 2000-----fallow
 2001-----fallow

Determination: Ineligible. The land has not been summer fallowed by year-to-year fallow then crop.

Scenario 10

Producer summer fallowed the land.
 1996-----wheat
 1997-----summer fallow
 1998-----wheat
 1999-----wheat
 2000-----summer fallow
 2001-----wheat

Determination: Eligible. The land has a summer fallow rotation that counts as cropping history. The land has 6 years cropping history 1996-2001.

Scenario 11

New land was broke out in 1996 and planted to wheat since.
 1996-----grass
 1997-----wheat
 1998-----wheat
 1999-----wheat
 2000-----wheat
 2001-----wheat

Determination: Eligible. Land meets 4 of 6 cropping history 1996-2001.

Scenario 12

Land cropping history:
 1996-----wheat
 1997-----wheat
 1998-----wheat
 1999-----wheat
 2000-----wheat
 2001-----wheat

Determination: Eligible land meets 4 of 6 cropping history 1996-2001.

Q26 A producer has HEL and NHEL fields on a tract of land. Is only the HEL land eligible for CRP offer?

A No. HEL is not a consideration for land eligibility. According to subparagraph 97 B, land that meets cropping requirements, must meet one of the following land eligibility requirements to be eligible to be offered:

- weighted average EI of 8 for the 3 predominant soils on the land offered
- land is 2003 or 2004 expiring CRP
- land is located in a state CPA. Maps of the state CPA were provided at CRP training

Q27 The AGSS software shows a producer's land is eligible but it is NHEL land. How can this be? We are not in a priority area nor is the land expiring CRP.

A The land eligibility in this case is based on an EI of 8 in 3 predominant soils for the field offered. We do not need to worry about the field classification of NHEL or HEL to screen eligibility. All offered land shall be entered in the AGSS to see if the land calculates as eligible.

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

- A (cont.) NHEL fields were fields that did not have a predominance of highly erodible land units. Since we are using only 3 soils for CRP, this could allow NHEL fields to be eligible.
- Q28 I have reviewed my soil rental rate posting report. Previously, the lowest rental rate in my county was \$20; now it is \$15. How did this occur?
- A In developing the soils database for AGSS, all possible cropped soils had to be given a rental rate that previously were not on the posting report. Dune or frequently flooded soils were examples of low rental rate soils that were added. The State Committee determined the rental rate for these soils shall be 75% of the lowest rental rate in the county. Additionally, some frequently flooded soils had a rental rate but were adjusted to this category for consistency.
- Q29 Concerning conversion of a monoculture under N1b, is there a minimum acreage to convert?
- A No, the policy is that 51% of the monoculture offered must be converted. Therefore, if you have 90 acres of a native grass and 10 acres of a monoculture, you would need to convert 5.1 acres of the monoculture to a native grass species to get the 20 points in N1b.
- Q30 The required management provisions provided in OK Notice CRP-550 indicate that a CP1 acreage of warm season grass may be mowed between February 1 and April 1 and that existing contracts can do these management activities. I have a producer with an existing contract that would like to mow their CP1 warm season acreage in May. Can the mowing be done and receive the required management cost share?
- A First, there cannot be any activity during the May 1 through July 1 nesting season, so this producer could not mow in May. Secondly, only required management activities done during the specified period in OK Notice CRP-550 are eligible for cost share. The producer may discuss the need for mowing with NRCS, and if determined necessary, it may be completed with a modified plan and no cost share after the nesting season. The mowing cannot be done for cosmetic purposes.
- Q31 Does overseeding into a permanent grass cover qualify as being cropped (i.e. wheat into bermuda?)
- A Overseeding into a permanent grass cover that is on land identified as cropland and the over-seeded crop is taken to harvest, hayed, or grazed, would be eligible for cropping history.
- Q32 I have a producer that wants to offer land for CRP, but there are no crop reports on file in the county office. Can the producer late file?
- A Yes, see paragraph 195 A. The late report, if accepted, is for CRP purposes only, and no fee is required.

CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 26 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued)

Q38 What are the advantages and disadvantages of practice CP25 being offered?

A The advantages of CP25 are:

- 50 points N1a cover score for acres in CP25
- 25 points N4, Enduring Benefits
- 5 points N5d, Carbon Sequestration
- up to a 15 year contract

The disadvantages may be that the required plant mix may have some species the producer does not desire. Mainly, the CP25 cover mix requires more grass species, forbs and legumes. The CP25 practice cannot be grazed or hayed under managed or emergency provisions.

Q39 My county is a 25% limitation county. Do I have to announce Signup26?

A Yes, subparagraph 69 C requires the signup to be announced and that only continuous offers for practices CP5A, 16A, 22, 29, and 30 may be offered in the county. Additionally, the county may administer land located in a county that is not at 25% who may elect to sign up.

Q40 Do I receive the N1c wildlife priority zone 30 points for just being located in the zone?

A No, the offered acreage must be located in the zone, and one of the following practices must be on the offer: CP2, CP4B, CP4D, CP10, CP12, or CP25. Note that CP25 will not give wildlife zone points, and all offers with CP25 will have to be special processed after signup.

Q41 A producer has an expiring CRP contract and wants to offer only a portion of the expiring acreage. Is this allowed?

A Yes.

Q42 A producer has five species of grass under CP10? Does it qualify for a 50-point cover?

A No., a 50-point cover contains at least one forb, shrub, or legume. Without this, the cover would be 40 points.

Q43 A producer has a CRP contract expiring September 30, 2003. Will his CRP acres automatically be approved for General Signup 26?

A No. The offered expiring acres would still need to be processed in the AGSS system as a Type B to calculate the soil rental rate. It does not have to meet the EI of 8. It is automatically eligible as an offer. The offer would still compete with all others to be accepted in the program.