

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- CRP continues to accept lands with greater environmental benefits without a significant effect on commodity prices, farm income, or the United States' ability to supply world markets with agricultural products.
- Compared to signup 15, a lower weight for the cost factor was used. This slight reduction yielded significantly higher environmental benefits.
- A comparison of environmental benefits for signup 16, signup 15, and the historical CRP indicates an unadjusted (for cost) environmental benefits index of 187, 138, and 84, respectively.
- This significant increase in environmental benefits comes at a slightly higher program cost per acre but CRP program costs continue to be more than \$5 per acre below historic program costs.
- Of the 5,924,375 acres approved, 2,022,636 acres were for land under CRP contracts that expired September 30, 1997.
- In March 1997, there were about 33.0 million acres in CRP.
In December 1997, there were less than 29 million acres in CRP.
In October 1998, there will be just under 30 million acres in CRP.
- CRP continues to be a highly competitive program. Applicants reduced their bids by an average of over \$3.52 per acre from the maximum rental rate.
- Applicants continue to enhance wildlife habitat on CRP land. The wild life habitat factor increased by over 20% between the 15th and 16th signup. Over 300,000 acres of wetlands and adjoining habitat will be restored.