



Fiscal Year 2016 Biomass Crop Assistance Program

OVERVIEW

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), created by the 2008 Farm Bill and reauthorized with modifications by the 2014 Farm Bill, is part of the national strategy to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil, improve domestic energy security and reduce carbon pollution, by developing more agricultural products made in rural America.

BCAP provides funds to assist farmers and forester landowners with growing, maintaining and harvesting biomass that can be used for energy or biobased products. BCAP provides assistance in three ways:

- Establishment payments. For growing new biomass crops, BCAP can cover up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing a new, perennial energy crop¹ or biomass crop;
- Maintenance payments (annual payments). To maintain the new biomass crop as it matures until harvest, BCAP can provide up to five years of assistance for an herbaceous crop, or up to 15 years for a woody crop; and
- Retrieval payments (matching payments). To collect existing biomass residues that are not economically retrievable, BCAP can help with the cost of sustainably harvesting and transporting agricultural or forest residues to an energy facility (biomass conversion facility).²

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) reauthorized BCAP with an annual mandatory funding level of \$25 million through FY 2018, of which between 10 and 50 percent (no greater than \$12.5 million) is reserved for matching payments. Annual appropriations acts may limit the BCAP funding level to less than \$25 million. BCAP is administered by the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA).

PROJECT AREAS

A project area has specified boundaries approved by USDA and includes producers with contract acreage (i.e. crops under contract with USDA to receive establishment and maintenance payments) that, upon maturity, will be supplied to an existing or in-progress biomass conversion facility. A project area is physically located within an economically practicable distance from the biomass conversion facility (BCF).

ELIGIBLE CROPS

For establishment and maintenance payments in project areas, eligible biomass (or “eligible crops”) does not include plants that are invasive or noxious, as determined by USDA, or “conventional” crops (crops that are eligible to receive payments under Title I of the 2014 Farm Bill, such as barley, corn, grain, sorghum, oats, rice or wheat; honey; mohair; oilseeds (including canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower seed, soybeans, sesame seed and sunflower seed); peanuts; pulse; chickpeas, lentils and dry peas; dairy products; sugar; and wool and cotton boll fiber).

Other restrictions may apply. For full details on eligible crops, please consult your local FSA county office or visit the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

ELIGIBLE MATERIALS

For retrieval payments, eligible biomass (or “eligible materials,” such as certain agricultural and forestry residues) include:

- Agricultural or crop residues (i.e. crop residues remaining in the field after harvest

¹ Up to \$750 per acre for underserved producers, or up to \$500 per acre for other producers.

² At the rate of up to \$1 for each \$1 per ton delivered to an approved biomass conversion facility, not to exceed \$20 per dry ton, for a period no longer than two years.

of conventional crops), woody agriculture residues, like orchard waste, that are removed directly from land, in accordance with an approved conservation plan; and

- Woody forest residues removed directly from that land that are byproducts of preventative treatments that reduce the threat of forest fires, disease or insect infestation; that do not have an existing market that are removed directly from the land, in accordance with an approved forest stewardship or equivalent plan.

Biomass that is ineligible for retrieval payments include:

- Conventional crops that are eligible to receive payments under Title I of the 2014 Farm Bill;
- Secondary agricultural or forest residues resulting from the processing activity of a delivered primary product of biomass; and
- Animal waste or byproducts, bagasse, food and yard waste, algae.

Other limitations may apply. For full details on eligible materials, please consult your local FSA county office or visit the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

BIOMASS CONVERSION FACILITIES

A Biomass Conversion Facility (BCF) is a facility that converts biomass into heat, power, biobased products or liquid biofuels. BCFs themselves do not receive BCAP funding; rather, approved facilities are eligible to receive BCAP-funded biomass.

- Before biomass suppliers can receive retrieval payments, a BCF must be approved by FSA before receiving the deliveries.
- Before biomass suppliers can receive establish or maintenance payments, a BCF must be approved by FSA, or must demonstrate that it will be operational in time for when the biomass has reached maturity for delivery.
- FSA may prioritize the approval of facilities that best meet BCAP objectives.

Other restrictions may apply. For full details, please consult your local FSA county office or visit the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PERIODS FOR FY 2016

Enrollment periods for BCAP funding will be announced by news release in the spring of 2016. To enroll in electronic updates for upcoming BCAP announcements, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This fact sheet is intended for basic informational purposes only. For full information on specific program requirements and restrictions, please consult USDA FSA or visit the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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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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