



Biomass Crop Assistance Program for Fiscal Year 2017

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

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 (BCF). A project area is physically located within an economically practicable distance from the 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 of conventional crops), woody agriculture residues, like orchard waste, that are removed directly from land, in accordance with an approved conservation plan; and

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.

- 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;
- Animal waste or byproducts, bagasse, food and yard waste and algae; and
- Biomass that is economically retrievable.

Other limitations 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 BCF is a facility that converts biomass into heat, power, biobased products, research (material conversion) or advanced 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 FISCAL YEAR 2017

Enrollment periods for BCAP funding will be announced by news release in November 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; other restrictions may apply. For full information on specific program requirements and eligibility, 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>.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, 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.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- 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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