

**Stakeholder Lunch and Learn:
CLEAR30
Running Time: 30:14 minutes**

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to USDA's Farm Service Agency's Stakeholder Lunch and Learn on CRP CLEAR30. We thank you for taking time today to sit with us, grab some lunch, and learn about a new program under FSA's Conservation Reserve Program.

Slide 2: Introduction

On the screen you are seeing two pictures of our speakers today. I am the one on the bottom. My name is Cynthia Cuellar, and I am a National Outreach Specialist for the Farm Service Agency. And with me today is my colleague, Ginny.

Hi, my name is Ginny Green, Virginia Green is my official name. I am the Continuous CRP Program Manager in the National Office. And the Program Manager responsible for CLEAR30.

Slide 3: Housekeeping

Thanks for being with us Ginny. So, for the Lunch and Learn discussion today, audio will be streaming through your computer, and this session is being recorded. We will post the recording to our public website under FSA Outreach Webinars, for later viewing. Also, the audience is in listen-only mode. So, please utilize the chat box feature to submit any comments or questions.

Slide 4: Agenda

During our discussion today, we'll provide an overview of what the Conservation Reserve Program is. And then we will focus on CLEAR30, describing what it is, the eligibility requirements, the unique options offered under CLEAR30, the application process for those that might be interested in CLEAR30, a review of what FSA Outreach has done to get awareness of the program out to eligible producers, and some points on how stakeholders can engage with their State Farm Service Agency.

Slide 5: Conservation Reserve Program

Okay, so the Conservation Reserve Program, which we refer to as CRP, is a conservation program administered by Farm Service Agency.

CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States, and this year we are celebrating the 35th year of the Conservation Reserve Program.

CRP helps producers better manage their operations while conserving natural resources. By enrolling in CRP, producers are improving water quality, reducing soil erosion, and restoring habitat for wildlife. Farmers and ranchers who enroll in the program receive a yearly rental payment for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, known as "covers," to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

This program has evolved over the years, providing a variety of conservation and economic benefits for landowners. And today we're talking to you about one of the new pilot program under CRP, which is CLEAR30.

Slide 6: CRP CLEAR30

The CLEAR30 pilot program allows for existing CRP water quality practices to be re-enrolled into CRP contracts. And as indicated by the name, CLEAR30 is a pilot in which FSA is providing this first-time opportunity to enroll into CRP contract for 30-years.

Never before have we offered a program like this with such a long timeframe.

The Pilot will be focused in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay Priority Areas, which includes the States of: Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

And the sign-up began this past Monday, on July 6th and will continue through August 21st.

So now let's get into the eligibility requirements.

Slide 7: CLEAR30 Eligibility

Ginny, what do landowners need to know about CLEAR30 if they are interested in applying?

So, Cynthia, in addition to being located in one of the 12 pilot states, the landowner also need to have a Continuous CRP CLEAR initiative practice that expire on September 30, 2020.

CLEAR practices are water quality practice, and they are listed on the screen. Some of them are: Grass Waterways; Contour Grass Strips; Filter Strips; Riparian Forested Buffers; Wetland Restoration, and Duck Nesting Habitat.

Slide 8: What's Unique about CLEAR30?

Thanks Ginny, and we mentioned before that the CRP program has evolved over time. Which includes some of the unique options that are offered under CLEAR30 that are not offered under other CRP programs. Can you talk about what those options are?

So, the first unique option I want to highlight is the option for Maintenance Coverage under CLEAR30 for the full 30-year contract. Under regular CRP the participant is responsible for conducting the maintenance on their CRP contract acreage. For CLEAR30 the participant will have two options they can choose from are: The landowner can opt to continue to do the maintenance themselves and FSA will pay them to do it. Which is also unique to CLEAR30. Or the landowner can opt for FSA to contract a vendor to conduct the maintenance activities.

Slide 9: What's Unique about CLEAR30? Continued...

The second unique feature of CLEAR30 is that landowners in these contracts will receive a twenty-seven and a half percent enhancement to the annual rental payment vs enrolling that contract into a ten to fifteen year contract under Continuous CRP.

Slide 10: Application Process

Thanks Ginny. So those are two unique and I'm sure they're attention getters for this program.

So for those interested in CLEAR30, how can they begin an application?

Since CLEAR30 is only applicable to producers already enrolled in CRP, with expiring contracts that are coming up on September 30th of this year, an interested landowner just needs call their local FSA office, tell them they are interested in CLEAR30, and our staff can generate the forms needed. The staff can then mail or email the producer the forms. And the producers can utilize OneSpan to provide signatures on the forms.

That is very good to know. Especially with our FSA Office still operating under additional safety measures in response coronavirus outbreak. And I want to remind the audience that FSA County Offices are now making in-person appointments at several locations across the country as part of USDA's phased reopening process. Other USDA Service Centers remain open for business by phone appointment only. So to find out how your local FSA Office is operating, you can find those updates online at www.farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Slide 11: FSA Outreach for CLEAR30

Okay, so let's talk a little bit about outreach around this program, and how stakeholders can engage with Farm Service Agency, if they haven't done so already, to get the message out about this new pilot program.

So to help with the awareness of this new pilot, FSA sent CLEAR30 informational postcards to eligible producers in May of this year. We sent those postcards to prepare producers with options for their upcoming expiring CRP contracts.

We've also provided our State Outreach Coordinators and with News Release templates. Which they can then utilize to send GovDelivery messages to people in their states.

To receive notifications or when announcements are made from FSA in your State, you can sign-up for email notifications through GovDelivery at www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe.

Slide 12: Stakeholder Engagement with FSA

FSA is open and willing to collaborate with stakeholders that want to help spread the word about our programs, and provide a better understanding of how to apply to FSA programs.

One of the ways to engage with us, is through our FSA State Outreach Coordinator. There is a State Outreach Coordinators in every state, and you can find out who that person through our online website. We have everyone listed there, at fsa.usda.gov/outreach.

We also encourage you to work with your State Outreach Coordinators to develop webinars, and virtual meetings. Again, our staff are open to invitations to joining zoom meetings or Facebook live events for producers to join, in which we can go over the program eligibility and unique features.

Another way of assisting in getting information out, is utilizing your organization's communication channels. We are happy to share language and descriptions of the program with you, to be shared within the resources that you have such as regular newsletters, webpages, social media posts, live streams, and radio spots for example.

If your organization covers multiple states, you can reach out to the national outreach division team. And we'd be happy to help you organize some sort of outreach. And you can reach us via email at: fsaoutreach@usda.gov. And I'll post that email later on in the slides.

Slide 13: Stakeholder Highlights of CLEAR30

And here are some key takeaways that we hope you can discuss with any of the landowners that you work with, that are looking for options for their expiring CRP contracts.

One is that CLEAR30 is the first CRP program to offer a 30-year contract.

It's the first CRP program to offer Maintenance Payments. And it's also offering enhanced annual payment rates.

And you'll also want to be aware that the sign-up period has begun, and it goes through August 21st.

And if you need more information about CLEAR30 in the meantime, the fact sheet for the program is available on the website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/newsroom under the Conservation section.

Slide 14: Additional Resources

I wanted to share just a couple other additional resources. We have the farmers.gov webpage, and the newFarmers.usda.gov webpage. Both of these have a variety of resources for producers and those interested in agriculture.

Slide 15: Questions

Okay, so is the end of our slide deck, so we wanted to thank those who have joined us today. And we're going to take a few minutes to go over some of the questions. Also, if you would like to collaborate with FSA if work across different states, here is our email address:

fsaoutreach@usda.gov.