

Flood Damage Recovery Special Initiatives

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm Service Agency

September 2011

Fact Sheet



Introduction

Montana has experienced severe environmental damages this past year due to flooding. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) will be offering three programs to assist farmers and ranchers with flood recovery efforts.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program, administered by NRCS, for farmers and ranchers who face serious threats to soil, water, and related natural resources. EQIP provides technical and financial assistance in designated priority areas with significant conservation needs. Areas with severe damage to the floodplain are being targeted. Conservation practices such as fences, access control, watering facilities, critical area plantings, and weed control will be offered to allow for the recovery of the floodplain.

Montana farmers and ranchers have from Sept. 15 through Nov. 1, 2011, to sign-up.

Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by FSA, is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. CRP protects millions of acres of topsoil from erosion and is designed to safeguard the Nation's natural resources. Through CRP, a landowner can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland. Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled at any time under CRP continuous sign-up. Certain eligibility requirements still apply, but offers are not subject to competitive bidding. Cropland, including field margins, planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity, or marginal pastureland that is suitable for use as a riparian buffer (the vegetated area next to a river or stream) or for similar water quality purposes, may be eligible.

Montana farmers and ranchers can sign-up for continuous CRP at any time.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), administered by NRCS, is a voluntary conservation program that offers landowners the means to restore, enhance, and protect wetlands on their property through permanent easements. The NRCS is looking for sites on agricultural land where former wetlands have been drained, altered, or manipulated. The landowner must be interested in restoring the wetland and then protecting the site. Once under an easement or a contract, the land can no longer be cropped. Haying and grazing may be used through a wetland management plan determined by NRCS to maintain riparian functions.

First cutoff date: Nov. 11, 2011

Second cutoff date: June 1, 2012

To Apply

Producers interested in applying for any of these programs must submit applications through their local USDA Service Center, which can be located through the Montana NRCS Web site at www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/offices/index.html or the Montana FSA Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

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