

August, 2010

Platte County News

Conservation Reserve Program Information

CRP General Signup Announced- Signup by Appointment Only



Platte County FSA

1502 Progress Court
Wheatland, WY 82201
307-322-4050 (phone)
307-322-4109 (FAX)

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

David Hinman
Darrel Vaughn
Britt Wilson
Ruth Cundall

Staff

Mike Hoffland DD
Rick Carroll CED
Dixie Mount FLO
Celia Herman PT
Mitzi Mudgett PT
Joni Reyes PT



The Program:

- CRP is the largest private-land voluntary conservation program that helps farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers use their environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolling in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers. In return, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants rental payments, cost-share and technical assistance and does so on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation.
- Eligible acreage includes cropland that has been cropped or is considered to be cropped for four of the six years between 2002 - 2007. It is located within conservation priority areas, and it is land that has an average Erodibility Index (EI) of 8 or greater, which means it is highly erodible. Or, it is land that has been in CRP, but the contract is expiring.
- The 25 percent cropland limit continues to apply. Generally, this limit means that no more than 25 percent of a county's cropland may be enrolled in the CRP and the Wetlands Reserve Program. The 2008 Farm Bill added authority to exclude cropland enrolled under CRP's continuous signup or under CRP's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) provided the county government agrees.
- After signup ends on August 27, FSA will evaluate the offers. During September, FSA expects to notify producers about offers that are acceptable or rejected.
- FSA will accept enough acres in this general signup, as well as other CRP initiatives such as continuous signups, to bring CRP enrollment close to the 32 million acre statutory cap.
- FSA will select the highest ranked offers that provide significant environmental benefits relative to cost by using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) based on six factors. All offers will be evaluated competitively. After the end of signup, offers will be ranked and an EBI cutoff score selected.
- The EBI factors are: (1) wildlife habitat cover benefits that encourage covers and habitats on contract acreage that will be most beneficial to wildlife; (2) water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching; (3) on-farm benefits of reduced erosion; (4) enduring benefits; (5) air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion; and (6) cost.
- There were a few changes to the EBI since the last general sign up in 2006. For the wildlife factor, the subfactor for wildlife enhancement was changed to add 20 points for establishing pollinator habitat. Offers that are less than ten acres and provide at least one acre of pollinator habitat, or offers that are ten acres or greater and

provide at least ten percent of the acreage offered in pollinator habitat, will receive 20 points. Also, the cost factor was changed to remove points awarded if producers elected not to receive a cost share payment. The cost factor was further changed when land was offered for less than the maximum payable rate. Before, points were added based on the number of dollars offered below the maximum. However, this was changed so that offers that are less than the maximum payment rate will receive points based on the percentage offered below the maximum payment rate.

- Producers should be aware of several ways that CRP may assist in creating new wildlife habitat and enhancing water, soil, and air quality through a number of varieties of grasses and/or forbs that can be established on the offered acreage to accomplish their conservation goals.
- Producers should also be prepared to identify specific acreage they want to offer and if the acreage is owned through undivided interests of more than the operator of the land, then all owners must agree to enroll the land. An affidavit or similar document signed by all owners would be required.
- Generally, CRP contracts are in effect for a term of 10 years. However, contracts for land devoted to certain practices such as wildlife corridors or rare and declining habitat may be in effect for up to 15 years, as selected by the participant.
- Producers leasing the land they hope to enroll in CRP must provide a lease agreement for the full duration of the CRP contract at sign up, unless the landowner is party to the CRP agreement. In that case, both landowner and leaseholder must complete the enrollment.
- CRP participants may harvest this year's crops even when normal harvest occurs after the contract effective date of October 1, 2010. The first year's payment is not affected by the harvest date.
- Producers with acceptable offers may begin establishing the cover immediately. However, those who establish the cover before the CRP contract is approved do so at their own risk.
- Land that meets basic eligibility criteria may be offered during any CRP sign-up even if it was previously offered but not accepted.
- CRP enrollment requires that producers protect and enhance the soil, water, and wildlife resources of their environmentally-sensitive acreage while receiving market-based rental rates.
- Approximately 31 million acres are currently enrolled in CRP. However, CRP contracts amounting to about 4.5 million acres expire September 30, 2010. The statutory maximum number of acres that can be enrolled in the program at any one time is 32 million acres.
- CRP annual payments are made in arrears, so participants with an effective contract date of October 1, 2010, are scheduled to receive their first annual rental payment after October 21, 2011.

CRP Participants Provisions

USDA has made provisions for CRP participants to lease land for Gas, Oil, or Mineral Rights Exploration. Before you as a producer engage in the exploration or leases you need to contact the County Office because there are specific guidelines that you are required to follow.

In the case of Wind Turbines County Committee may authorize the installation of windmills, wind turbines, and wind monitoring towers or other wind-powered generation equipment on CRP acreage on a case by case basis. You will need to contact the County Office to be to get the specific guidelines that you are required to follow.

Actively Engaged

FSA wants to remind producers about the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation.** The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members doesn't exceed \$40,000.

Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) / Loan Deficiency Payment (LOP) Information

Crop Loans are available for program crops and oilseed crops. Nine-month commodity loans can be made to eligible producers.

Producers in an ACRE-enrolled farm will have a 30 percent reduction in MAL / LOP rates. Wool, mohair and honey are not subject to ACRE provisions.

Producers with average adjusted gross nonfarm income that exceeds \$500,000 are not eligible for a marketing loan gain or an LOP.

Marketing loan gains or LOP's will no longer be limited. (There is no limit on the total dollar amount of LOP's.)

CCC will no longer require the execution of UGRSA in storage facilities that are either of the following: federally licensed or state licensed with an operating warehouse licensing program.

It is the producer's responsibility to maintain the quality of the grain in storage.

Both husband and wife must sign the loan document. A notarized or FSA witnessed FSA Power of Attorney Form, FSA-211, may be filed giving the husband and/or wife authority to sign for each other.

Measurement services are available to measure the grain in your storage facility. The cost is \$30 per farm plus \$16 per hour / \$8 for every 30 minutes after the first hour with a minimum charge of 1 hour. Fees must be paid for the measurement before the loan check can be disbursed. We strongly recommend that producers get a measurement service to avoid penalties for overstating grain in storage.

Please call the office for more information if you are interested. The loan process does take some time and will be done by appointment only.

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Reminders

Notice of Loss

A Notice of Loss, CCC-576, must be filed for crop losses within 15 days of the loss event or whenever the loss becomes apparent. Losses not reported timely could result in a loss of eligibility for payment.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PLATTE COUNTY FSA OFFICE
1502 PROGRESS COURT
WHEATLAND, WY 82201

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

August 2, 2010	CRP Sign up #39 Begins Through August 27, 2010
August 27, 2010	Last Day To Enroll in CRP Sign Up #39
September 6 th	Labor Day Office Closed
October 11 th	Columbus Day Office Closed
November 5 th	Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters
November 11 th	Veterans Day Holiday Office Closed
November 25 th	Thanksgiving Day Office Closed
December 6 th	Ballots to be returned to County Office
Continues	Continuous CRP sign up
Continues	Farm Stored Facility Loan Program

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