

Fact Sheet



**Conservation Reserve Program -
Critical Feed Use**

Authorization

The Food Security Act of 1985, authorized the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which is implemented through the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) by the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Overview

The CRP is a voluntary program to cost-effectively assist producers in conserving and improving soil, water and wildlife resources by converting highly erodible and other environmentally-sensitive acreage to a long-term vegetative cover. CRP participants enroll land under contracts for 10 to 15 years in exchange for annual rental payments and financial assistance to install certain conservation practices and maintain vegetative or tree covers.

Modification to CRP Contract for Critical Feed Use

CRP participants with certain established vegetative cover may voluntarily have their CRP contract modified by CCC to utilize certain land enrolled in CRP for critical feed use, including haying or grazing. The critical feed use modification to the CRP contract will limit the scope, frequency and duration of haying and grazing. To ensure protection of the resources,

critical feed use is not authorized during the primary bird nesting or brood-rearing season. The more environmentally sensitive land will not be eligible for haying and grazing and must be left undisturbed. This modification for critical feed use is only available in 2008 after the primary nesting seasons ends through November 10, 2008.

Signup

CRP participants may request the voluntary modification to the CRP contract beginning June 2, 2008, at their local FSA Service Center.

Eligible Producer

CRP participants may utilize their CRP acreage for critical feed use or may lease the privilege to any other individual.

Eligible Acreage

Acreage eligible for critical feed use includes acreage that is fully established and devoted to the following CRP practices:

- CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP4B, Permanent Wildlife Habitat – Corridors
- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP10, Vegetative Cover – Grass

– Already Established

- CP18B, Establishment of Permanent Vegetation to Reduce Salinity
- CP18C, Establishment of Permanent Salt Tolerant Vegetative Cover

No more than 50 percent of the eligible CRP acreage may be used for haying. Grazing can be conducted at 75 percent of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recommended stocking rate on 100 percent of the eligible acres or at 100 percent of the stocking rate on 75 percent of the eligible acres.

Ineligible Acreage

The most environmentally sensitive land enrolled in CRP is ineligible for critical feed use. These lands include wetlands, buffers, filter strips and other practices not listed as eligible. In addition, acreage ineligible for critical feed use includes acreage devoted to:

- useful life easements, as determined by CCC
- land within 120 feet of a stream or other permanent water body

Modifications to Contract and Conservation Plan

Participants who request a voluntary modification to the CRP contract to allow critical feed use must also obtain a modified conservation plan for haying

Fact Sheet**Conservation Reserve Program - Critical Feed Use****May 2008**

and grazing management in accordance with NRCS Field Office Technical Guide haying and grazing standards. The modified plan will provide for haying or grazing in a manner that is consistent with the conservation goals of the CRP to reduce soil erosion and enhance water quality and wildlife habitat.

Administrative Fee

No payment reduction will be assessed on contracts being utilized for this critical feed use. Producers will be required to pay a fee of \$75 for the modification of their CRP contract.

For more information about FSA programs, visit: www.fsa.usda.gov

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.