



FACT SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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Conservation Reserve Program - Haying and Grazing of Acreage

Overview

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

The Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, authorized CRP. The program is also governed by regulations published in 7 CFR part 1410. The program is implemented by FSA on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Haying and Grazing

Haying and grazing of CRP acreage is authorized under certain conditions to improve the quality and performance of the CRP cover or to provide emergency relief to livestock producers due to certain natural disasters. There are three types of haying and grazing authorization: managed, routine, and emergency.

Primary Nesting Season

Generally, CRP acreage may not be hayed or grazed during the Primary Nesting Season for certain wildlife established by state FSA committees in consultation with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Technical Committee.

Managed Haying and Grazing

Managed haying and grazing is authorized for CRP contracts approved before July 28, 2010, and is authorized no more frequently than one out of every three years after

the CRP cover is fully established. Managed haying and grazing may be available less frequently in a particular area depending upon local conditions, resource capacity, and the conservation goals of the program. Also, acreage either hayed or grazed under managed, emergency, or routine provisions in either of the previous two years is ineligible for managed haying or grazing in the current year.

Managed **haying** is authorized for a single period up to 90 days. Managed **grazing** is authorized for a single period up to 120 days or for two 60-day periods.

CRP participants requesting managed haying and grazing:

- Must file a request with their local FSA office indicating the acreage to be hayed or grazed before the activity begins; and
- Are assessed a 25 percent payment reduction except when managed haying and grazing is conducted in an "emergency" area as discussed below.

Routine Grazing

Routine grazing is authorized for CRP contracts approved after July 28, 2010. Routine grazing is currently authorized at the same frequency as managed grazing for each specific state. Acreage hayed or grazed under managed, emergency, or routine provisions in either of the two previous years is ineligible for routine grazing in the current year.

Routine grazing is authorized for a single period up to 120 days or for two 60-day periods.

CRP participants requesting routine grazing are assessed a 25 percent payment reduction.

Emergency Haying and Grazing

Emergency haying and grazing of CRP acreage may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought or similar natural disaster.

Emergency authorization is provided by either national FSA office authorization or by a state FSA committee determination utilizing the U.S. Drought Monitor.

National FSA Authorization

After receiving authorization from the national FSA office, county eligibility is based on a county FSA committee request documenting a 40 percent or greater loss in normal hay and pasture production and either:

- For drought conditions, precipitation levels at an average of 40 percent or greater loss of normal precipitation for the 4 most recent months plus the days in the current month before the date of request; or
- For excessive moisture conditions, precipitation levels at an average of 140 percent or greater increase in normal precipitation during the 4 most recent consecutive months plus the days in the current month before the date of request.

Emergency haying or grazing is limited to the acreage physically located within the boundary of the eligible county or portion of a county. Under this authority, acreage will only be authorized for a specified time and may end earlier than announced if conditions improve.

State FSA Committee Determination

County FSA committees may request emergency haying or grazing for all or part of a county from the state FSA committee using the U.S.

Drought Monitor. The state FSA committee may approve emergency grazing on a county-by-county basis if the county is designated as level “D2 Drought-Severe” according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. It may approve emergency haying on a county-by-county basis if the county is designated as “D3 Drought-Extreme” or “D4-Exceptional” according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The U.S. Drought Monitor is available online at: <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>

Under a state committee determination, emergency haying is authorized for a single period up to 60 days. Emergency grazing is authorized for a single period up to 120 days.

Eligible Acreage

Acreage eligible for managed or emergency haying and grazing includes acreage devoted to the following practices: CP1, CP2, CP4B, CP4D, CP10, CP18B, CP18C, and CP38 if included in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) proposal.

Ineligible Acreage

Acreage ineligible for managed or emergency haying and grazing includes acreage devoted to:

- Useful life easements;
- Land within 100 feet of a stream or other permanent water body;
- The following practices: CP3, CP3A, CP4, CP4A, CP5, CP5A, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP8A, CP9, CP11, CP12, CP13A, CP13B, CP13C, CP13D, CP14, CP15, CP15A, CP16, CP16A, CP17, CP17A, CP18, CP18A, CP19, CP20, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP24, CP25, CP26, CP27, CP28, CP29, CP30, CP31, CP33, CP35, CP36, CP37, CP39, CP40, CP41 and CP42.

Note: USDA can grant exceptions when circumstances warrant.

Modified Conservation Plan

Before CRP acreage is declared eligible for haying or grazing, a modified conservation plan developed by NRCS or a technical service provider must be obtained. The modified conservation plan must be site specific, include the authorized duration, and reflect local wildlife needs and concerns. The primary purpose must be to maintain vegetative cover, minimize soil erosion, and protect water quality and wildlife habitat quality.

File Request Before Starting

CRP participants requesting emergency or managed haying and grazing must file a request with their county FSA office indicating the acreage to be hayed or grazed before the activity begins.
CRP Enrollment

Required Payment Reduction

Legislation that authorized the CRP requires a payment reduction to be assessed. CRP participants are assessed a haying or grazing payment reduction of 25 percent.

Duration

Under managed or state committee-authorized haying or grazing, eligible acreage may be hayed for a single period of 90 days or grazed for a single period up to 120 days or for two 60-day periods.

Under national authority, acreage may be hayed or grazed for a specified announced period, which may end earlier if conditions improve.

For More Information

More information on CRP haying and grazing, and CRP in general, is available at local FSA offices and on FSA’s Web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

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