

**United States Department of Agriculture  
Farm Service Agency**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**New Managed Haying and Grazing Provisions for Some Conservation Reserve Program  
Lands in Kansas**

The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) has prepared a Environmental Assessment (EA) on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation to evaluate the environmental consequences associated with implementing new managed haying and grazing provisions on certain Conservation Reserve Program lands in Kansas.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that supports the implementation of long term conservation measures designed to improve the quality of ground and surface waters, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat on environmentally sensitive agricultural land. On September 26, 2006, a legal settlement was signed between the National Wildlife Federation and FSA that limited the frequency of haying on CRP lands to once every ten years and grazing to once every five years in the State of Kansas; with a suspension of haying and grazing during the primary nesting season (April 15 to July 15). The settlement stipulated that if a change to the frequency of haying and grazing or the primary nesting season (PNS) dates is desired, then an Environmental Assessment would be prepared that identifies the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of such a change. The State Technical Committee and the National Office of FSA propose to change the settlement provisions for managed haying and grazing in the State of Kansas. The need for these proposed changes are to (1) effectively manage CRP covers and improve their performance to meet their conservation purpose, and (2) make CRP an attractive program to landowners. This EA assesses the potential environmental impacts of increasing the frequency of managed haying and grazing on certain CRP lands while maintaining the PNS period.

**Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, managed haying and grazing would occur once every three years, outside of the current PNS of April 15 to July 15, on lands enrolled in CRP under certain conservation practices. The specific conservation practices eligible for managed haying and grazing are:

- CP 1: Introduced grasses and legumes
- CP 2: Permanent native grasses
- CP 4B: Permanent wildlife habitat (corridors)(limited to non-easement lands)
- CP 4D: Permanent wildlife habitat (limited to non-easement lands)
- CP 10: Vegetative cover – grass-already established
- CP 18B: Permanent covers reducing salinity (limited to non-easement lands)
- CP 18C: Permanent salt tolerant covers (limited to non-easement lands)

Managed haying and grazing is not authorized for any other CRP practices, land enrolled in useful life easements, or land within 120 feet of a permanent body of water.

## Reasons for Finding of No Significant Impact

In consideration of the analysis documented in the EA and the reasons outlined in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the Proposed Action would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment; therefore, an EIS will not be prepared. The determination is based on the following:

1. The Proposed Action as outlined in the EA would maintain vegetative cover that improves water quality, reduces soil erosion, and provides food and shelter for wildlife species. Positive, long-term effects to biological resources, air quality and socioeconomic resources are expected to result from implementation of the Proposed Action.
2. Potential beneficial and adverse impacts of implementing the Proposed Action have been fully considered within the EA. The Proposed Action would mimic the historic disturbance frequency of the Great Plains which rejuvenates grasslands and provides the most beneficial habitat for wildlife species. Based on the resource analyses provided in the EA, no significant adverse direct or indirect effects were identified.
3. The Proposed Action would not have adverse effects on threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat. In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the effects of implementing the Proposed Action on threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitat were addressed in the EA.
4. The Proposed Action would not involve effects to the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial.
5. The Proposed Action would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
6. The Proposed Action does not result in cumulative significant impacts when considered with other actions that also individually have insignificant impacts. Cumulative impacts of implementing the Proposed Action were determined to be not significant.
7. The Proposed Action does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

## Determination

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and FSA's environmental regulations at 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 799, which implement the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508, I find the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment; therefore, no environmental impact statement will be prepared.

Approved:

Adrian J. Polansky  
Signature  
ADRIAN J. POLANSKY  
Name  
STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Title

03-01-2010  
Date