



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Sign-up Announced

(TUALATIN, OR), July 28, 2010 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that a general sign-up for the USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program will begin on August 2, 2010 and continue through August 27, 2010.

Lynn Voigt, State Executive Director for the USDA’s Farm Service Agency in Oregon, explained today that the Conservation Reserve Program is the largest private-land voluntary conservation program in the country. “The Conservation Reserve Program helps farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers use their environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits,” Voigt said. “Producers enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years. They plant long-term, resource-conserving covers on their land, and in return, the Farm Service Agency provides participants rental payments, cost-share for cover establishment, and technical assistance.”

Competitive sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) opens on August 2, 2010. “From that date through August 27, producers may offer eligible land for this program,” Voigt said.

In Oregon, nearly 504,000 cropland acres are currently under one form of CRP contract or another. Of those CRP contract acres, approximately 76,500 are under contracts set to expire this fall. In total, almost 688,000 cropland acres in Oregon might be available for enrollment during this sign-up period, including the 76,500 acres under expiring contracts. Contracts awarded under this sign-up are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2010.

After signup ends on August 27, 2010, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) will evaluate offers, and select the highest ranked offers that provide significant environmental benefits relative to cost. This will be done by using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) based on six factors that consider environmental benefits to be gained. All offers will be evaluated competitively. After the end of signup, offers will be ranked and an EBI cutoff score selected. Producers submitting offers that are accepted will be notified by the end of September.

Nationally, the USDA is authorized to maintain CRP enrollment up to 32 million acres. According to Voigt, FSA will accept enough acres in this signup to bring CRP enrollment close to the 32 million acre cap. Voigt added that interest in the signup is likely to exceed the acreage limit.

All interested farmers and ranchers are urged to contact their local FSA office soon to learn more about this program. For more information, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

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