

For: State and County Offices

Signup Dates and General Information for CRP Signup 18

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A

Background

CRP signup period 18 is scheduled for October 26, 1998, through December 11, 1998, to accept offers of environmentally sensitive acreage for new 10- to 15-year contracts to cost-effectively enroll acreage for program year 2000.

The continuous signup provisions will continue to be offered during the general signup 18 period. For program control purposes, the continuous signup number will change from signup 17 to signup 19 for CRP-1's offered on or after October 1, 1998.

No decision has been made regarding the number of acres to be enrolled during signup 18. The number of acres accepted will be determined after signup 18 concludes based on the environmental benefits and the cost of the acres offered. It is anticipated that the CRP offer process for signup 18 will continue to be highly competitive. The national EBI cutoff score will be determined after signup concludes. The signup 18 EBI cutoff score may be equal to, higher than, or lower than the cutoff score for previous signups.

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<p>Disposal Date</p> <p>June 1, 1999</p>	<p>Distribution</p> <p>State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices; FS, 80; CSREES, 5</p>
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1 Overview (Continued)

B

Setting Priorities

State and County Offices shall set workload priorities and plan office activities to devote all available resources to accomplish tasks relating to CRP within the given deadlines. Workload activity for FSA and NRCS will be significant in certain areas because of the number of acres anticipated to be offered for enrollment or reenrollment.

C

Purpose

This notice provides:

- information about:
 - the signup process
 - submitting offers
 - effective dates of signup 18 CRP-1's
 - rejecting ineligible offers
 - other general information.
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2 Process Summary

A

Signup Activities

The following table describes the signup and offer selection activities in order of occurrence.

Note: See 2-CRP, Part 6.

Step	Action
1	General signup 18 will be held concurrently with continuous signup 19. County Offices may accept offers of acreage for signup 18 from October 26, 1998, through December 11, 1998.
2	<p>NRCS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delineate acreage offered that is suitable and eligible for signup 18• inform producers that the acreage may be eligible for immediate approval under the continuous signup process. <p>Note: Acreage offered for continuous signup will be automatically accepted provided all eligibility requirements are met. See 2-CRP paragraph 98.</p>

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2 Process Summary (Continued)

**A
Signup Activities
(Continued)**

Step	Action
3	<p>Producers will be provided a maximum payment rate developed using CRP-2 before a CRP-1 is submitted.</p> <p>Copies of the applicable National ranking plan shall be made available to all producers submitting offers.</p> <p>Note: For signup 18, State ranking plans are not authorized.</p> <p>Producers shall be notified that the following may enhance the acceptability of the offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering only the most environmentally sensitive acreage for enrollment • planting an approved mixture of covers that benefit wildlife • enhancing the existing cover to provide an approved mixture that benefits wildlife • lowering the offer amount below the maximum payment rate • developing a permanent water source for wildlife on the acreage offered • establishment of wildlife food plots • establishing cover that will provide enduring benefits past the life of CRP-1 • declining available C/S.
4	<p>Producers may request eligibility determination scenarios from FSA and NRCS to find configurations that best suit the producer’s objectives. Multiple scenarios may be requested given the unique Soil Rental Rates that are offered for each eligible soil type and the varying potential for production flexibility contract acreage reductions caused by enrolling a different amount of cropland into CRP.</p>
5	<p>During signup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA and NRCS County Offices will make all eligibility, ranking score, soils data, and related determinations, and complete CRP-2 for eligible offers • FSA County Offices shall enter data from CRP-2 in the CRP software as soon as data is available. • NRCS shall determine and record the National ranking factors and subfactors on CRP-2 <p>Note: For signup 18, State ranking plans are not authorized.</p>

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2 Process Summary (Continued)

A
Signup Activities
(Continued)

Step	Action
6	<p>By January 8, 1999, County Offices shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enter all eligible offers records into the System/36• transmit all eligible offer records to the State Office. <p>Important: Only eligible offers shall be entered into the System/36 and transmitted to the State Office. Offers that do not meet all the eligibility requirements, such as the 12-month ownership requirement, shall not be entered into the System/36.</p> <p>When received, State Offices shall immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review the data for errors• if needed, have FSA County Offices correct errors and retransmit the records to the State Office.
7	<p>By January 13, 1999, State Offices shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• transmit eligible offer records for all FSA County Offices to KCMO according to 1-CRP• telephone Karen McGinnis, KCMO, at 816-926-2164, to notify KCMO when offer file transmissions are being sent or notify KCMO of a negative report.
8	<p>After signup, CEPD and KCMO shall review transmitted files and distribute questionable records to the applicable State Offices to review for correction, if appropriate, and retransmission to KCMO.</p> <p>Within the time period permitted, State Offices shall make corrections, when applicable, and retransmit offer records to KCMO.</p>

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2 Process Summary (Continued)

**A
Signup Activities
(Continued)**

Step	Action
9	After the files have been corrected, points for the cost factor will be assigned by the National Office for each record based on the offer amount submitted and the cost share amount on CRP-1. Note: Incorrect or incomplete information on CRP-1 will lead to delays and possible errors.
10	CEPD and KCMO shall rank all offers based on the National ranking plan.
11	DAFP will issue a CRP notice to State and County FSA Offices to provide whether the offer was acceptable or rejected. The notice will include provisions for handling records omitted from the transmission that are later determined eligible for participation and for transmitted records that contain erroneous data.

**B
Using Registers**

COC's may approve a register of producers at the county level as of COB on the final date for submitting offers, if needed, according to 2-CRP, paragraph 152.

3 Submitting Offers for Signup 18

**A
Required
Signatures on
CRP-1**

Only 1 signature of an **eligible** producer is required by the end of the signup period to submit an offer for signup 18. All remaining signatures are required within 30 calendar days after the producers are notified that the offer was determined acceptable. If the FSA County Office is unable to obtain all required signatures, the offer is determined ineligible and CRP-1 shall not be approved. Liquidated damages are not applicable if all signatures cannot be obtained.

Note: See 2-CRP, paragraph 157 for required signatures.

**B
Submitting
Offers by Tract**

Producers shall submit only 1 offer per tract per program year. Offers must be submitted on a tract basis. Multi-tracts shall **not** be used for submitting CRP offers. See 2-CRP, paragraph 154.

Note: For signup 18, the program year for all approved CRP-1's shall be 2000.

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3 Submitting Offers for Signup 18 (Continued)

C

Accepting Offers on Acreage Enrolled in CRP

For signup 18, acreage currently enrolled in CRP that expires September 30, 1999, may be offered for enrollment only if the effective program year of CRP-1 is 2000. Acreage currently enrolled in CRP that is scheduled to expire anytime after September 30, 1999, is not eligible to be offered for signup 18.

For signup 18, existing CRP acreage is not automatically eligible to be offered. Existing CRP acreage is only eligible to be offered when the offered acreage meets both of the following:

- scheduled to expire from CRP-1 on September 30, 1999
- 1 or more of the land eligibility categories in 2-CRP, subparagraph 82 B.

Neither the type of cover existing on the CRP acreage nor the practices identified on the current CRP-1 prohibit the acreage from being offered. Contracts accepted under signup 18 are new contracts and are subject to 1-PL. The early terminations provisions do **not** apply to contracts accepted under signup 18.

Cropland acreage enrolled in CRP maintains its eligible cropland status. Therefore, COC is not required to determine whether the acreage currently enrolled in CRP:

- has been planted to an agricultural commodity in 2 of the crop years 1994 through 1998
- is physically capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

Note: Cropland acreage must still be legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. See 2-CRP, paragraph 82.

4 Effective Dates of CRP-1's for Signup 18

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CRP-1 Effective Dates

For signup 18, the effective date of **all** approved CRP-1's shall be October 1, 1999.

Note: See 2-CRP, paragraph 223.5.

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5 Notifying Producers of Ineligible Offers

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Rejecting Ineligible Offers

COC shall **immediately** notify producers who submit an ineligible offer that the offer is rejected using CRP-26. See 2-CRP, Exhibit 12.

Ineligible offers include, but are not limited to, offers:

- for land physically located in a county that has reached or exceeded the 25 percent cropland limitation, unless the county has an approved waiver **before** signup 18 begins
- from producers that do not meet the 12-month ownership/operatorship requirement

Note: Ineligible offers shall be **immediately** rejected regardless of whether a waiver of the 12-month ownership/operatorship requirement will be requested.

- for land that does not meet the cropland eligibility criteria. See 2-CRP, paragraph 82.
- that have a rental rate per acre offered that exceeds the maximum payment rate for the land offered.

FSA County Offices shall **not** transmit offers to the State Office that have been determined ineligible by COC according to this paragraph.

6 Other Issues

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Contract Acreage Limitation

Before completing CRP-2, the County Office shall ensure that the total CRP and AMTA contract acreage does not exceed the available agricultural use acres on the farm.

If the total AMTA contract acres and the CRP acres, excluding any marginal pastureland, such as WPB noncropland acres or riparian buffers planted to trees, based on the effective dates of the CRP contracts, exceeds the available agricultural use acres for the farm, the producer shall reduce the acres being offered for enrollment in CRP or the AMTA contract acres. See 2-CRP, paragraph 196.

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6 Other Issues (Continued)

B

New Forms

CRP-2 has been revised. The revised CRP-2 captures all EBI subfactor scores. A land eligibility category for acres offered under approved Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) agreements has been added. In addition, the continuous signup land eligibility categories have been expanded to include “Marginal Pasture Land Acres Devoted to Trees.”

Important: Only FSA County Offices within approved CREP areas shall use the “CREP” land eligibility category on CRP-2. Only enter acreage offered under an approved CREP agreement in the “CREP” category. State Offices must develop a State amendment that provides instructions on completing CRP-2 for acreage offered under approved CREP agreements. All State amendments must be approved by DAFP **before** they are issued to FSA County Offices.

Notes: For signup 18, FSA County Offices shall use CRP-2 dated July 29, 1998. COC’s shall destroy old versions of CRP-2.

Both CRP-2B and CRP-37 have been revised. FSA County Offices shall destroy old stock of these forms and ensure that CRP-2B dated July 28, 1998, and CRP-37 dated August 26, 1998, are used.

C

Measurement Service

Producers shall be required to pay for a measurement service before CRP-1 is approved unless the acreage offered is an official field or reoffered acreage that was measured before enrollment. See 2-CRP paragraph 223.

D

Documenting HEL Evaluations for CRP Purposes

HEL evaluations that are completed by NRCS for CRP purposes upon request of the producer will not be considered redefinition of the area for HELC purposes according to 6-CP.

HEL determinations for areas evaluated for CRP purposes using the weighted EI of 8 or greater method shall **not** be recorded on the official aerial photography according to 2-CP and 6-CP.

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6 Other Issues (Continued)

E

Signup 18 Fact Sheet

A signup 18 fact sheet is being completed and will be available soon.

7 Action

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State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- set workload priorities and plan office activities to devote all available resources to CRP
- ensure that all counties that have reached or exceed the 25 percent cropland limitation or meet the criteria in 2-CRP, paragraph 255, that wish to conduct general signup 18 for land physically located within the county have been approved for a waiver of the 25 percent cropland limitation **before** signup 18 begins

Note: See Notice CRP-318, paragraph 6.

- ensure that all FSA County Offices have the correct forms and information needed to conduct signup 18.
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FSA County Office Action

FSA County Offices shall:

- set workload priorities and plan office activities to devote all available resources to CRP
 - announce signup 18 according to 2-CRP, paragraphs 151 and 255
 - review 2-CRP, Part 6, before signup 18 begins
 - ensure that only eligible offers are entered in the System/36 for transmission to the State Office
 - provide a copy of the signup 18 fact sheet to all producers submitting an offer.
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