

For: State and County Offices

Preparing for CRP General Signup 43

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

On February 1, 2012, USDA announced that the next general CRP signup will be held from March 12, 2012, through April 6, 2012. Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during CRP signup 43. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on September 30, 2012, may submit offers. Accepted contract for CRP signup 43 will begin on October 1, 2012.

For signup 43, FSA will use the environmental benefits index (EBI) to rank offers for selection. The Tool for Environmental Resource Results Assessment (TERRA) and Conservation Online System (COLS) are web-based EBI determination tools which must be used for general signup 43. These tools will use similar databases (soils, conservation priority areas (CPA's), zones, etc.) that were used for previous general signups.

B Setting Priorities

State and County Offices shall set workload priorities and plan office activities accordingly to ensure timely program implementation.

C Purpose

This notice provides:

- signature requirements and the deadline for CRP-1's
- policy for approved conservation plans
- other general information.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2012	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice CRP-706

2 Pre-Signup Activities for General Signup 43

A Preparing for Signup

County Offices will use TERRA and COLS to process offers for general signup 43. To assist State and County Offices in preparing for general signup 43, the following pre-populated files have been provided.

- CPA's and conservation priority zone tables for signup 41 shall continue to be used for signup 43.
- Look-up tables for EBI sub-factors N2b, N2c, and N5a, established for signup 41 shall continue to be used for signup 43.

B Soils in the Soils Data Management System (SDMS)

SDMS is maintained by the State Office. In preparation for signup 43, State Offices should work with NRCS State Soil Scientist staff to ensure that all soils data within SDMS are complete and accurate.

- A soil must have all soil attributes and a soil rental rate before it can be used by COLS during signup.
- The soil rental rates will remain unchanged from CRP general signup 41.
- State Offices will complete any edits to soil attributes in SDMS at <https://arcticocean.sc.egov.usda.gov/soilDbMgmt/SoilWelcome.do>.
- Soils in SDMS that are not likely to be cropped, i.e. water, barren, or dam soil map units, may be voided by the State Office upon consultation with NRCS State Soil Scientist staff.
- County Offices will no longer have to download new soils data into COLS since there is now a direct link between TERRA and COLS.

If there are questions about SDMS, contact Jean Agapoff by either of the following:

- e-mail at jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov
- telephone at 530-792-5594.

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2 Pre-Signup Activities for General Signup 43 (Continued)

C Producer Notifications

Letter notifications will be sent by the National Office the week of February 20, 2012, to **all** participants with general and continuous signup CRP-1's scheduled to expire on September 30, 2012.

See:

- Exhibit 1 for an example of the coversheet for notification letters
- Exhibit 2 for an example of the expiring general and continuous signup notification letter.

The mailing list of CRP notification letters sent to CRP participants will be posted the week of February 13, 2012, on the FSA Intranet at

<https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/states/cepd/crp/g43/default.aspx>.

3 WRP and 25 Percent County Cropland Waivers

A Updating WRP Acres

The National Office will post State tables of physical county WRP acres by COB February 9, 2012. The WRP State tables will be published on CEPD's SharePoint site at **<https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/states/cepd/crp/g43/default.aspx>**.

Each State Office shall download its spreadsheet, which includes columns for current physical county WRP acres and a blank revised WRP cropland acres column for the State Office to complete.

State Offices are to contact County Offices and verify the accuracy of the **WRP cropland** acres for each physical county in the table. The WRP acres provided on the spreadsheet for review are based on PECD data, which may include non-cropland WRP. Revised acre totals of **only cropland** WRP are to be included on the State spreadsheet.

Note: Revisions to the WRP acres on the spreadsheet require local FSA and NRCS concurrence.

State Offices must submit a completed spreadsheet of all physical county WRP cropland acres, including updated county totals, to CEPD by February 27, 2012. Submissions must be sent to Jean Agapoff by e-mail at **jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov**.

B County Cropland Waivers

All existing 25 percent county cropland limitation waivers previously approved will be extended for general signup 43.

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4 Required Practice Information for Conservation Plan

A Job Sheets

When developing the conservation plan, State Conservation Program Specialists must work with the NRCS State CRP Program Manager to update or develop job sheets by practice, to provide County Offices seeding practice requirements for all applicable practices.

Note: It is possible that multiple job sheets could be needed if there is a variance because of soil properties, moisture regimes, etc., that would impact planting requirements.

As part of these job sheets, State Offices shall request soil limitations for suitable vegetation by practice that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- grasses
- legumes
- forbs
- shrubs
- trees.

These tables must list the factors (salinity, water table, depth to bedrock, etc.) that would limit planting decisions or practice options for CRP.

Example: Depth to bedrock may limit potential to plant CP3A, hardwood trees, on a site. County Office personnel must have soil limitation data to ensure that all practices listed with CRP offers have suitable soil types.

Note: Longleaf pine suitability index information is recorded in SDMS and is automatically applied by the TERRA and COLS offer system.

These job sheets should include a minimum of the following:

- seedbed and site preparation
- timing of seeding or planting
- fertilization requirements
- weed control
- varieties of seed or planting material
- amount of seeding or planting
- maintenance requirements for the practice
- soil limitations
- management measures by practice.

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4 Required Practice Information for Conservation Plan (Continued)

B Cost Estimates for Practices

For the “new offer” COLS process, FSA established a cost for each practice to be used for the total estimated practice cost for each offer. County Offices shall update or establish an estimated total C/S amount using flat rate C/S rates for components that accurately reflect the average per acre cost of installing the whole practice. Do **not** use “not to exceed” rates when establishing this cost. This cost data will be used in the COLS software to print the total **estimated** cost on CRP-1.

5 Conservation Plan Provisions for Signup 43

A Rescinding Interim Conservation Plan Provisions

Interim conservation plans are **not** authorized for signup 43. An approved conservation plan must be completed and signed before CRP-1 may be approved.

B Conservation Plan Completion

A conservation plan must be completed no later than August 10, 2012. The NRCS National Office has agreed with this deadline.

Notes: Participants must be notified that starting a practice before approval of CRP-1 is at their own risk. C/S will only be paid for those eligible costs that are approved under the conservation plan.

The specifications for all applicable practices shall be included in the approved conservation plan according to 2-CRP.

6 Signup 43 Signature Requirements

A Requirements

To ensure CRP-1's for general signup 43 are approved by September 30, 2012, **all** participants are strongly encouraged to sign and date CRP-1 no later than COB September 14, 2012.

Note: See 2-CRP, paragraph 335 for signature requirements during signup.

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7 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- make preparation for CRP general signup a high priority when setting workload priorities and scheduling office activities
- follow the provisions of this notice
- ensure that County Offices follow the provisions of this notice.

B County Office Action

County Offices shall:

- make preparation for CRP general signup a high priority when setting workload priorities and scheduling office activities
- follow the provisions of this notice.

Example of the Cover Sheet for the Notification Letters

TOP NOTCH COUNTY FSA OFFICE
123 MAIN STREET
TOP NOTCH, STATE 12345-6789

JOHN Q PUBLIC
987 FIRST STREET
ANY TOWN, STATE 98765-4321

Administrative St/Cty Code	CRP Contract Number	Number of Contract Acres	Farm Number	Contract Type
00 222	0001 Z	5.5	234	Continuous
00 222	0003 X	111.1	345	General
00 222	0004 Y	12.4	234	General

Example of the Expiring General and Continuous Signup Notification Letter



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm and Foreign
Agricultural
Service

Farm Service
Agency

1400 Independence
Ave, SW
Stop 0510
Washington, DC
20250-0510

February 17, 2012

Dear CRP Participant:

Your Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract expires on September 30, 2012. Information specific to your expiring CRP contract(s) is on the reverse side located below your name and address of this letter. You have the following options:

1. **You may let the contract expire.** You will receive your final payment in October of 2012. You may plant, graze or hay the acreage after September 30, 2012. If eligible, you may also apply for early release of CRP acres, which would allow you to prepare the land for planting before September 30, 2012. Expired contract acres that were devoted to trees will no longer be considered cropland and may be ineligible for subsequent CRP contracts and other farm programs. Before planting, check to see if your land may be subject to the conservation and wetland compliance provisions. Ask your local Farm Service Agency's office to reinstate your crop acreage bases, if they were reduced when you entered into the CRP contract.
2. **If you have a general CRP contract, you may submit a bid to re-enroll all or a portion of your expiring contract acres into a new CRP contract during the CRP general signup from March 12 through April 6, 2012.** If accepted, you will be eligible to receive a 10- to 15- year contract that would become effective on October 1, 2012. Also check to see if your land is eligible for a continuous CRP contract. You will be required to have a new conservation plan and be subject to adjusted gross income (AGI) requirements and other eligibility requirements.
3. **If you have a continuous CRP contract, you may re-enroll your acreage by August 1, 2012.** Your contract will be accepted, if your land meets eligibility requirements. You will be eligible to receive a 10- to 15- year contract that would become effective on October 1, 2012. You will be required to have a new conservation plan and be subject to AGI requirements and other eligibility requirements.

Please contact your local FSA office for further information.

Sincerely,

Bruce Nelson
Administrator



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