

For: State and County Offices

Continuous Signup Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI)

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

In February, the Administration announced a continuous CRP signup initiative to voluntarily protect Highly Erodible Cropland, defined as cropland that has a weighted Erodibility Index (EI) greater than or equal to 20.

The average soil erosion rate on cropland with an EI greater than or equal to 20 is over 20 tons per acre, per year. Soil erosion at this rate will reduce the long term productivity of these lands and will have the potential to have significant off-site impacts to both water quality and air quality.

Analysis of recent CRP signups indicate that well over 90 percent of the cropland with an EI greater than or equal to 20 were accepted. In most cases, enrollment in long term cover is a very cost-effective means to protect the natural resources of these highly erodible sites compared to structural water conservation measures.

This initiative will be available beginning July 23, 2012. Offers will be accepted under continuous signup criteria until the earlier of:

- the State allocation provided in Exhibit 1 is reached
- September 30, 2012.

B Purpose

This notice provides the following:

- policy about this new initiative
- State Acreage Allocation (Exhibit 1)
- CRP-2C (Exhibit 2).

Disposal Date January 1, 2013	Distribution State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices
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1 Overview (Continued)

C Objectives

The objective of the initiative is to offer a continuous signup to establish long-term cover on highly erodible cropland that has a weighted average EI greater than or equal to 20 that will:

- reduce erosion to below the soil loss tolerance level which will assist in maintaining the long-term soil productivity of the land
- reduce off-site adverse impacts to water quality
- reduce adverse impacts to hydrology by changing the land use, including reducing potential adverse flood impacts associated with severe storm events
- reduce adverse impacts commonly associated with wind borne soil, including impacts to human health and property damage associated with severe dust storms.

2 Policy

A State Allocation

Total enrollment in this initiative shall not exceed 750,000 acres. State enrollment allocations are provided in Exhibit 1 and are based on the total non-irrigated cultivated cropland in a State that has an EI greater than or equal to 20 using the 2007 National Resources Inventory survey.

All States have at least 500 acres available to allocate. The maximum initial State allocation is 50,000 acres. However, States that use all of their initial allocation may submit a request for additional acres.

B Eligible Land

Eligible cropland for HELI must:

- be cropland according to 2-CRP, paragraph 151
- have a weighted average EI of 20 or greater for the offered acreage

Notes: The producer may enroll a field(s) or a portion of a field provided the weighted average EI (wind or water) for all land offered is greater than or equal to 20 based on the 3 predominant soils; and

The TERRA tool must be used to determine the EI of the offered acreage.

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2 Policy (Continued)

B Eligible Land (Continued)

- be needed and feasible to solve the resource concern, as determined by NRCS or Technical Service Provider (TSP) according to 2-CRP, subparagraph 181 A

Notes: Existing grass stands that are **not** currently enrolled in CRP are **not** eligible.

Consistent with the statute and criteria for all other continuous signup practices, expiring CRP acreage is eligible for re-enrollment and therefore, automatically meets the needed and feasible eligibility requirements.

C Eligible Practices

The following practices are eligible for HELI:

- CP1
- CP2
- CP3
- CP3A
- CP4D
- CP25.

Covers on both new land or expiring CRP land, must meet the minimum N1A Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) point value provided in 2-CRP, Exhibit 26, for the applicable practice. Expiring CP10 or CP11 may be offered as the appropriate practice provided the cover meets the N1A EBI point value.

Acceptable Offer Example: A producer has land that has a weighted average EI of 22. The land is not currently enrolled in CRP. The land meets the cropping history requirements of 2-CRP, paragraph 151. The practice is determined needed and feasible by NRCS or TSP. The producer is offering to install a CP1. The cover must be a minimum 2 to 3 species of an introduced grass.

D Incentives

Signup Incentive Payments, Practice Incentive Payments, and per acre maximum payment rate incentives are **not** authorized.

E Effective Start Date

For land not currently enrolled in CRP, producers may defer the effective start date of CRP-1 up to 6 months according to 2-CRP, paragraph 213.

General signup contracts scheduled to expire on September 30th of the current FY may be offered for enrollment under HELI. The effective start date of the CRP-1 is October 1 of the year the existing CRP-1 expires.

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2 Policy (Continued)

F Duration of Contracts

The CRP-1 period for CRP-1's under HELI is 10 years in length.

G Continuous Signup Number

For acreage enrolled in the CRP under HELI, County Offices shall use the current continuous signup number.

Note: Continuous signup numbers change the beginning of every FY.

H New CRP-2C

CRP-2C has been modified with a July 16, 2012, revision date. The modification added a new land eligibility category in block 13 for "HEL EI \geq 20" The acreage offered that meets weighted average EI greater than or equal to 20 should be entered into block 13. See Exhibit 2 for CRP-2C.

3 Software

A Conservation Online System (COLS)

COLS was modified to allow processing of HELI offers. County Offices are restricted in COLS from approving contracts in excess of the State allocation. COLS will not permit the offer to be approved if the offer exceeds the State allocation.

Important: Manual processing of offers is not authorized except when COLS is unavailable. Offers manually completed must be immediately loaded into COLS when COLS becomes available. Do **not** approve manual offers before loading into the COLS system.

4 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices must review this notice with NRCS, TSP's, State Technical Committee, and other conservation partners.

B County Office Action

County Offices shall follow the provisions in this notice.

State Acreage Allocations

State	Allocation
Alabama	4,900
Arizona	500
Arkansas	700
California	2,500
Colorado	22,800
Connecticut	500
Delaware	500
Florida	500
Georgia	3,300
Idaho	5,300
Illinois	50,000
Indiana	36,400
Iowa	50,000
Kansas	28,000
Kentucky	39,400
Louisiana	1,700
Maine	500
Maryland	8,100
Massachusetts	500
Michigan	3,200
Minnesota	11,200
Mississippi	14,200
Missouri	50,000
Montana	45,000
Nebraska	42,300
Nevada	500
New Hampshire	500
New Jersey	1,600
New Mexico	17,700
New York	8,900
North Carolina	16,200
North Dakota	13,100
Ohio	24,300
Oklahoma	11,600
Oregon	1,800
Pennsylvania	46,700
Rhode Island	500
South Carolina	500
South Dakota	9,600
Tennessee	23,300
Texas	50,000
Utah	500
Vermont	700
Virginia	7,200
Washington	10,300
West Virginia	800
Wisconsin	50,000
Wyoming	1,800
Reserve	29,900
Total	750,000

Example of CRP-2C

This form is available electronically. (See Page 2 for Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Statements.)

CRP-2C (07-16-12)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency		1. Tract Number	2. Program Year
CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM WORKSHEET (For Continuous Signup)				3A. Sign Up Number	3B. Effective Date (MM-DD-YYYY)
4A. Farm Number	4B. Name and Address Of Producer (Zip Code):			5A. State & County Code Admin. Location	5B. State & County Code Physical Location
	Telephone Number (Include Area Code):			6. Contract Number	7. Acres for Enrollment
4C. County FSA Office Address (Zip Code):		4D. County FSA Office Telephone No. (Include Area Code):		8. IS Cost-Share Requested? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	9. Rental Rate Per Acre Offered \$
11. Practices:				10. Signup Type (Check one):	
				Continuous <input type="checkbox"/>	
				CREP <input type="checkbox"/>	
				FWP <input type="checkbox"/>	
12. HUC Number:				13. Land Eligibility Category by Acres: (Enter the amount eligible for each criteria.)	
A. Practices	B. Acres	C. Estimated Total C/S	D. Length	Marginal Pastureland	
				CREP Acres	
				Wellhead Protection Acres	
				Expiring CRP	
				Infeasible to Farm	
				Other Cropland	
				HEL EI ≥ 20	
14. Soil Map Data and Maximum Payment Rate Calculations:					
	A. Physical Location	B. Soil Survey ID No.	C. Map Unit Symbol	D. Acres	E. Soil Rental Rate
					F. Total Rent
(1) Primary				x \$	= \$
(2) Secondary				x \$	= \$
(3) Tertiary				x \$	= \$
TOTALS					\$
15. Weighted Average Soil Rental Rate (Col. 14F Total divided by Col. 14D total)			16. Total Incentive (If applicable) (Item 15 times 14D times applicable incentive percentage)		
\$			\$		
17. Soil Map Data and Maximum Payment Rate Calculations. For Infeasible to farm Acreage:					
	A. Physical Location	B. Soil Survey ID No.	C. Map Unit Symbol	D. Acres	E. Soil Rental Rate
					F. Total Rent
(1) Primary				x \$	= \$
(2) Secondary				x \$	= \$
(3) Tertiary				x \$	= \$
TOTALS					\$
18. Weighted Average Soil Rental Rate Plus Total Incentive (14F + 16 + 17F) divided by (14D + 17D)			CONTRACT TOTALS		
\$			19. Weighted Average Maintenance Rate for Contract	20. Maximum Payment Rate (Item 18 + Item 19)	
			\$	\$	

Example of CRP-2C (Continued)

CRP-2C (07-16-12)

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21. Tract No.	22. Current Field No.	23. Current Crop or Land Use	24. Crop Land Use Summary									
			A. Offered Acres	B. Eligible Acres	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.	H.	I.	
25. TOTAL ▶												

26. PRODUCER'S CERTIFICATION:

By signing below I certify to all of the following: (1) I have been informed of the estimated cost of establishing the cover offered; (2) I have been informed that if I decline cost share assistance I will be ineligible for cost share assistance; (3) I have been informed that I may be required to pay for a measurement service on the acreage offered before such acreage may be enrolled in the CRP; (4) To the best of my knowledge and belief the acreage of crops and land listed herein, if applicable, are true and correct; and (5) The signing of this form gives USDA representatives authorization to enter and inspect crops and land uses and for other purposes on the above identified land.

I understand that an inaccurate certification could result in a payment reduction or loss of program benefits.

26A. Signature (By)	26B. Title/Relationship of the Individual if Signing in a Representative Capacity	26C. DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)

NOTE: *The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is 7 CFR Part 1410, the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq.), and the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246). The information will be used by CCC to consider and process the offer to enter into a Conservation Reserve Program contract, to assist in determining eligibility, and to determine the correct parties to the contract. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated). Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility to enter into a Conservation Reserve Program contract.*

This information collection is exempted from the Paperwork Reduction Act, as it is required for administration of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (see Pub. L. 110-246, Title II, Subtitle J- Miscellaneous Conservation Provisions).

The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.

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