

**For:** State and County Offices

**Letter for 2017 Expiring CRP General and Continuous Signup Contract**

**Approved by:** Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

The 2014 Farm Bill requires that beginning FY 2017, no more than 24 million acres can be enrolled in CRP. Current enrollment in CRP is approximately 23.5 million acres. No determinations have been made concerning a general signup for FY17.

Notice CRP-809, issued on September 30, 2016, provided policy about:

- options for expiring continuous signup contracts and new enrollment for continuous signup 50
- CRP contract approval procedure for all continuous signup types, beginning October 1, 2016.

**B Purpose**

This notice provides:

- policy for allowing general signup contracts scheduled to expire on September 30, 2017, to be offered for a continuous signup contract with a contract effective date of October 1, 2017
- the expiring general and continuous signup notification letter (Exhibit 1).

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
July 1, 2017	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices and NRCS State Offices

## Notice CRP-817

### 2 Policy for Expiring General Signup Contracts

#### A Expiring 2017 General Signup Contracts

CRP general signup contracts scheduled to expire on September 30, 2017, may immediately offer the expiring contract for reenrollment into continuous signup 50 with a contract effective date of October 1, 2017.

**Note:** The 6-month contract deferral is not applicable.

#### B Producer Notification

Producer letter notifications were sent by Washington, DC the week of December 5, 2016, to all participants with general and continuous signup CRP-1's scheduled to expire on September 30, 2017. See Exhibit 1 for an example of the expiring general and continuous signup notification letter.

The mailing list of CRP notification letters sent to CRP participants was posted on the CRP SharePoint web site at <https://sharepoint.fsa.usda.net/states/cepd/crp/default.aspx>.

### 3 Action

#### A County Office Action

County Offices shall read and follow the provisions of this notice.

#### B State Office Action

State Offices shall ensure that County Offices follow instructions in this notice.

## Example of the Expiring General and Continuous Signup Notification Letter



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

December 1, 2016

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

Dear CRP Participant:

Farm Service  
Agency

Thank you for being part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Our records show that one or more of your CRP contract (s) expires on September 30, 2017. The program continues to experience record demand while having a lower acreage cap. While it is uncertain whether a CRP General Signup will be offered this year, you should not wait to consider the following options for your expiring contract(s):

1400 Independence  
Ave, SW  
Stop 0513  
Washington, DC  
20250-0513

1. **Continuous Enrollment or CRP Grasslands:** All or a portion of your acreage may be eligible for enrollment in a continuous CRP contract or the new CRP Grasslands Program. If you plan to return a portion of your land to production, important conservation benefits may still be achieved by re-enrolling sensitive acres such as buffers or pollinator habitat. Offers for the next CRP Grasslands ranking period must be submitted no later than December 16, 2016. Offers for continuous enrollment will be considered on a first come first serve basis, so submit your offer as soon as you can, but no later than **August 31, 2017**. If demand is as high as anticipated some offers may not be accepted because of the 24 million acre cap. The effective start date of the new contract would be October 1, 2017.
2. **Transition Incentives Program (TIP):** If you are not planning to farm the land from the expiring contract yourself, TIP may provide you two additional annual rental payments on the condition you sell or rent your land to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of an underserved group. New landowners or renters are required to use sustainable grazing or farming methods as they return the land to production. TIP offers a way to create new farming opportunities while continuing conservation efforts. If you are interested in TIP, contact your local FSA office no later than August 31, 2017.
3. **Contract Expiration.** If you do nothing, your CRP contract will expire. You will receive your final payment in October of 2017. You may plant, graze or hay the acreage after September 30, 2017. Since CRP land typically does not have a recent history of pesticide or herbicide application, the land may be valuable for organic production. Prior to contract expiration, you should visit with your local FSA office and review the current crop acreage base re-instatement provisions. Before planting, check with FSA or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to see if your land may be subject to conservation and wetland compliance provisions.
4. **Conservation Easements or Working Lands Programs.** CRP land may transition into conservation easements to provide longer term benefits. NRCS's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) or state or private easement programs may be an option. If you are planning to convert your CRP land to agriculture use, USDA's working lands programs, including FSA's CRP Grasslands, NRCS's Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) may be available to address your resource needs. In many cases a combination of approaches can be taken on the same parcel. For example, riparian areas or other sensitive parts of a parcel may be enrolled in continuous CRP and the remaining land that is returned to farming can participate in CSP and even receive additional ranking points.

Please contact your local USDA Service Center, or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp> to explore your options.

Sincerely,

Val Dolcini  
Administrator

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