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## **Montana FSA: USDA Announces More Than 3.4 Million Acres Selected for General Signup Conservation Reserve Program**

**News Release | Montana | March 26, 2020**

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**BOZEMAN, Montana, March 26, 2020** – Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue today announced the acceptance of more than 3.4 million acres in the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup recently completed, the first general signup enrollments since 2016. County offices will begin notifying producers with accepted offers no later than April 3.

Through CRP, farmers and ranchers receive an annual rental payment for establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Farmers and ranchers who participate in CRP help provide numerous benefits to the nation's environment and economy.

"The Conservation Reserve Program is one of our nation's largest conservation endeavors and is critical in helping producers better manage their operations while conserving valuable natural resources," State Executive Director Mike Foster said. "The program marked its 35th anniversary this year, and we were quite pleased to see one of our largest signups in many years."

Over these 35 years, CRP has addressed multiple concerns while ensuring the most competitive offers are selected by protecting fragile and environmentally sensitive lands, improving water quality, enhancing wildlife populations, providing pollinator forage habitat, sequestering carbon in soil and enhancing soil productivity. Seventy percent of the nation's land is owned and tended privately, and America's farmers, ranchers and landowners have willingly stepped up to protect the environment and natural resources.

This general signup included offers for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), which allows producers to install practices that benefit high-priority, locally developed wildlife conservation objectives using targeted restoration of vital habitat. Over 95 percent of SAFE offers submitted were accepted under this general signup representing more than 487,500 acres. This acceptance level highlights the commitment to SAFE as an important part of CRP.

The 2018 Farm Bill established a nationwide acreage limit for CRP, with the total number of acres that may be enrolled capped at 24.5 million acres in 2020 and growing to 27 million by 2023.

While the deadline for general CRP signup was February 28, 2020, signups for continuous CRP, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, [CRP Grasslands](#) and the [Soil Health and Income Protection Program](#) (SHIPP) are ongoing. The CRP Grasslands deadline is May 15, and the SHIPP signup begins March 30, 2020, and ends August 21, 2020.

Continuous and Grasslands enrollments are available nationwide. All counties located within the Prairie Pothole region states of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota are eligible for SHIPP.

This spring, FSA will roll out a new pilot conservation program, the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers 30 (CLEAR 30).

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

For state-by-state information on general signup results, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

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