



Montana FSA: USDA Offers CLEAR30 Option for Producers to Enroll Land with Expiring Conservation Contracts

News Release | Montana | April 05, 2022

Montana

Water Quality-Focused Program Builds Upon CRP Contracts

Montana, April 1, 2022 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing the signup period for its Clean Lakes, Estuaries, And Rivers initiative (CLEAR30) - a nationwide opportunity for certain landowners and agricultural producers currently implementing water quality practices through the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) to enroll in 30-year contracts, extending the lifespan and strengthening the benefits of important water quality practices on their land.

Producers may apply for CLEAR30, a voluntary, incentive-based conservation program, **from April 1, 2022, through Aug. 5, 2022.**

"Farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landowners know better than most that clean water is essential," said Les Rispens, Acting FSA State Executive Director in Montana. "I am proud that, last year, we were able to successfully expand our Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers initiative nationwide, and I look forward to once again providing producers and landowners with the opportunity to participate in this initiative and build upon their conservation investments for the long-term."?

Cropland and certain pastureland currently enrolled in Continuous CRP or the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and dedicated to an eligible water quality practice such as riparian buffers, contour strips, grass waterways or wetland restoration may be eligible if their contracts are expiring by September 30, 2022.

CLEAR30 contracts will be effective beginning Oct. 1, 2022. These long-term contracts ensure that conservation practices remain in place for 30 years, which improves water quality through reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and helping prevent algal blooms. Conservation in riparian areas also provides important carbon sequestration benefits. Traditional CRP contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

About CLEAR30?

CLEAR30 was established in the 2018 Farm Bill to better address water quality concerns. Originally, CLEAR30 was only available in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watersheds; in 2021, FSA made CLEAR30 available to agricultural producers and landowners nationwide, and participation grew nearly seven-fold from 2020 to 2021.

Annual rental payments for landowners who enroll in CLEAR30 will be equal to the current Continuous CRP annual payment rate plus a **20** percent water quality incentive payment and an annual rental rate adjustment of **27.5** percent.?

How to Sign Up?

To sign up for CLEAR30, landowners and producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) by **Aug. 5, 2022**.? Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator. Additionally, fact sheets and other resources are available at fsa.usda.gov/crp.

More Information?

CLEAR30 is an option available through CRP, which is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. CRP was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and stabilize commodity prices by taking environmentally sensitive lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing numerous conservation and economic benefits. In addition to CLEAR30, signups are also open for [Continuous CRP](#) and [Grassland CRP](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.??

#

Farm Service Agency:

1400 Independence Ave.
SW Washington, DC 20250

Contact:

FPAC Press Desk
FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov