USDA Accepts Nearly 2.7 Million Acres in Grassland CRP Signup

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Texas

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Successfully Closing the Gap and Bringing CRP Near to Acreage Cap

COLLEGE STATION, Texas, July 19, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting offers for nearly 2.7 million acres from agricultural producers and private landowners through this year's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grassland signup. This program allows producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while protecting grasslands and further CRP conservation efforts. Grassland CRP is part of the Biden-Harris administration's broader effort to address climate change and conserve natural resources. This year's signup results include more than 144,000 acres in Texas.

"This year's Grassland CRP signup demonstrates the continued success and value of investments in voluntary, producer-led, working lands conservation programs," said Kelly Adkins, State Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Texas. "Grassland CRP clearly demonstrates that conservation priorities and agricultural productivity not only have the capacity to coexist but also complement and enhance one another. Through all our working land conservation programs, farmers and ranchers play a critical role in helping secure the future of both our food production and our natural resources."

Additionally, USDA has accepted more than 1 million acres through the General CRP signup nationwide, and more than 465,800 acres have been submitted through the Continuous CRP signup so far this year.

Grassland CRP leverages working lands practices to improve biodiversity and conserve environmentally sensitive land. To target conservation in key geographies, USDA prioritizes land within two National Priority Zones: the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and the Dust Bowl area. FSA accepted more than 911,000 acres in these two zones. Land enrolled in these zones will contribute to broader USDA conservation efforts through Working Lands for Wildlife by conserving working grasslands and other lands that underpin iconic big game migrations.

Grasslands enrolled in CRP help sequester carbon in vegetation and soil, while enhancing resilience to drought and wildfire. Meanwhile, producers can still conduct common grazing practices, such as

haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land, which supports agricultural production.

Broadening Reach of Program

As part of the Agency's Justice40 efforts, producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers, limited-resource producers, and military veterans, received 20 additional ranking points to enhance their offers. From more than 6,400 underserved producers, USDA accepted offers of more than 1.8 million acres, about 74% of those who submitted applications.

Additionally, USDA is working to broaden the scope and reach of Grassland CRP by leveraging the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to engage underserved communities. CREP is a partnership program that enables states, Tribal governments, and non-profit entities to partner with FSA to implement CRP practices and address high priority conservation and environmental objectives. Interested entities are encouraged to contact FSA.

More Information

Producers can still make an offer to participate in CRP through the Continuous CRP signup, which is ongoing, by contacting FSA at their local USDA Service Center.

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 usda.gov.

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