

GENERAL CRP SIGN-UP 43

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) will be holding a General Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) this March 12th – April 6th. Take advantage of this program by applying at your local USDA FSA office. Whether you have a field with trouble wet spots or low yielding areas, erosion issues or simply want to increase wildlife habitat on your farm, CRP may provide you with a practice to address these issues.

To be eligible for CRP, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the close of the CRP signup period. Land must be cropland which has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002 to 2007. In addition, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average erosion index of 8 or higher or
- Be expiring CRP acreage or
- Located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area (see map)

Maximize your general CRP offer by: Choose a higher diversity mix of native species to get the maximum 50 points. CP42 (Pollinator Habitat), CP25 (rare and declining habitat), CP4D (5 species native mix for wildlife habitat), or CP2 (native 5 species mix) score 50 points. CP25 may cost more, but also gains an additional 25 points for enduring benefits and

5 points for carbon sequestration. CP42 also gains 5 points for carbon sequestration.

Establish pollinator friendly habitat 20 points. With CP 42 (Pollinator Habitat) producers can plant 9 species of pollinator-friendly shrubs, legumes, and wildflowers, with three in bloom for each of spring, summer, and fall on 1 acre or 10% of the offer, which ever is larger, and gain 20 points. Or,

Upgrade existing cover 20 Points. Expired or expiring CRP land with an existing stand of a single species of grass can gain 20 points if the producer converts 51 percent or more of it to a mixed stand of native species.

Consider offering only the portions of your fields with the highest erodibility index value. Soils that easily erode score more points.

If necessary, consider accepting less than the maximum rental rate. Producers can receive up to 25 points for bidding up to 15% below the maximum per acre rental rate.

Biologists with Pheasants Forever and South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks can help producers find a CRP practice and conservation plan which will increase eligibility for the program and provide the best fit for the producer's operation. They can also help the producer identify other sources of cost share assistance and incentives. See back page for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions about CRP

Q: *If I sign my land up for CRP, how long is the contract?*

A: CRP contracts may be for a period of 10 to 15 years.

Q: *What type of payments will I receive if I enroll my land into CRP?*

A: CRP program participants will receive annual rental payments. Rates are established for each type of soil in a county. The per-acre rental rates will be based on the three predominant soils within the offered area. Program participants will also receive cost share to establish cover and perform mid contract management.

Q: *Do I have to allow public access to my CRP?*

A: No. The producer retains the right to control public access. Additional incentives and payments are available through the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department if a producer is interested in allowing public access to their CRP.

Q: *I am located in a State or National Conservation Priority Area (CPA). Do I receive additional points for this?*

A: No. Producers do not receive additional points for being located in the CPA. However, there are wildlife, water quality and air quality zones within CPAs that provide additional points. Also, cropland within a CPA does not have to meet the Erosion Index of 8 or greater.

Q: *I have CRP set to expire September 30, 2012, is this CRP eligible to reenroll during this signup?*

A: Yes.

Q: I have old CRP that expired September 30, 2011 but it is still in grass cover, can I enroll this land into this signup? Do I have to break the cover and re-plant it or can it be accepted as is?

A: This cropland meets the cropping history requirements. The land may be offered with the existing cover. However, additional points may be obtained by changing the cover to a more diverse stand or a stand of native plants.

Q: Is haying or grazing allowed on land enrolled in this signup? What frequency can I hay or graze?

A: Yes. Producers can elect to participate in managed haying and grazing on specific practices. Managed haying and grazing can take place 1 out of every 5 years. Some practices may be eligible for emergency haying or grazing during designated emergency declarations. For specific details on haying and grazing contact your local Farm Service Agency.

Q: What types of activities do I have to do to meet the minimum requirements of mid contract management? How often do I have to conduct mid contract management?

A: Mid contract management must be performed once during the life of 10 year contract and twice for a 15 year contract. Activities include: light disking, heavy harrowing, prescribed burning, and mowing or clipping. Use of managed or emergency haying also qualifies.

Q: Is cost share available for establishing cover?

A: Yes, USDA will provide up to 50% cost share to establish cover on new CRP plantings. Other entities such as South Dakota Game, Fish and Park, and Pheasants Forever may also have additional cost share and incentives available. (See Conservation Partner Incentives section on back.)

Q: Are Signup Incentive Payments (SIPs) or Practice Incentive Payments (PIPs) available for the general signup on any practices?

A: No. SIPs and PIPs only apply to some Continuous CRP practices. For specific CRP details contact your local Farm Service Agency.

Q: If I apply, when will I find out if my offer will be accepted?

A: All offers are ranked based on a nationally developed ranking system. At the end of the signup period, the applicants with the highest ranking offers will be notified of acceptance. For specific CRP details and eligibility requirements contact your local Farm Service Agency office.

CONSERVATION PARTNER INCENTIVES

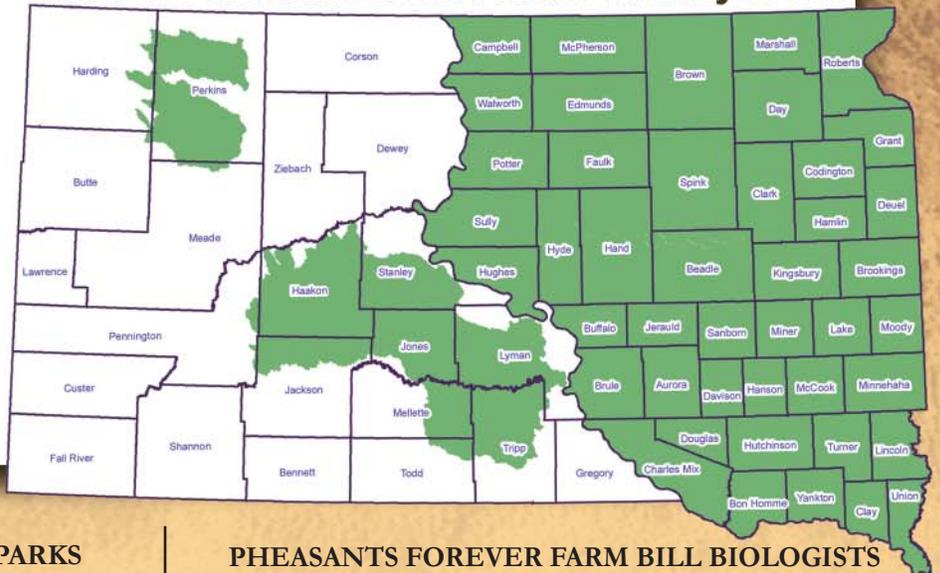
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks
Walk-In Hunting Access

CRP Retention Incentive - SDGFP will provide a one time upfront incentive of \$2.50 - \$5.00/acre/year, depending on the location of land in SD, if landowners allow public hunting access to the CRP for the length of their CRP contract.

SU 43 Upgrade Cover Incentive - SDGFP will provide a one-time upfront incentive of \$50/ac. to landowners who have expired or expiring CRP and would like to upgrade the cover in order to increase their EBI score to reenroll in CRP. Public hunting access to the CRP for the length of the CRP contract would be required.

Landowners are only eligible to receive one of the incentives. Both incentives are in addition to the \$6/ac. annual access rental payment and are subject to full repayment to SDGFP if the Walk-In Hunting Access contract is terminated early.

State and National Conservation Priority Areas



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**Contact your local USDA
Farm Service Agency
Office to Sign Up!**