

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
June 14, 2018
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



USDA Resumes Continuous Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment

One-Year Extension Available to Holders of Many Expiring Contracts through Continuous Signup

As part of a 33-year effort to protect sensitive lands and improve water quality and wildlife habitat on private lands, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will resume accepting applications for the voluntary Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Eligible farmers, ranchers, and private landowners can sign up at their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office between June 4 and Aug. 17, 2018.

FSA stopped accepting applications last fall for the CRP continuous signup. This pause allowed USDA to review available acres and avoid exceeding the 24 million-acre CRP cap set by the 2014 Farm Bill. New limited practice availability and short sign up period helps ensure that landowners with the most sensitive acreage will enroll in the program and avoid unintended competition with new and beginning farmers seeking leases. CRP enrollment currently is about 22.7 million acres.

2018 Signup for CRP

For this year's signup, limited priority practices are available for continuous enrollment. They include:

- grassed waterways,
- filter strips,
- riparian buffers,
- wetland restoration
- and others. To view a full list of practices, consult with FSA.

FSA will use updated soil rental rates to make annual rental payments, reflecting current values. It will not offer incentive payments as part of the new signup. USDA will not open a general signup this year, however, a one-year extension will be offered to existing CRP participants with expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less.

CRP Grasslands

Additionally, FSA established new ranking criteria for CRP Grasslands. To guarantee all CRP grasslands offers are treated equally, applicants who previously applied will be asked to reapply using the new ranking criteria.

About CRP

In return for enrolling land in CRP, USDA, through FSA on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP has improved water quality, reduced soil erosion and increased habitat for endangered and threatened species.

The new changes to CRP do not impact the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, a related program offered by CCC and state partners.

Producers wanting to apply for the CRP continuous signup or CRP grasslands should contact their USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit www.farmers.gov. More information on CRP can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM UPDATE

The Papio-Missouri River NRD has received an additional allocation of funds in the amount of \$141,436.00. Funds will be allocated to applications in the cropland fund pool.

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