

## Program Description

March 2003

## *Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program*

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### **Overview**

The Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program (CPGL) is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to owners and managers of private grazing land.

Private grazing land, the largest agricultural land use, constitutes nearly half of the non-Federal land of the United States. This vast area contributes significantly to the quantity and quality of water available for use and supports some of the most extensive wildlife habitats in the Nation. Healthy and productive grazing land is a substantial component of the agricultural economy and provides environmental benefits, such as erosion control, nutrient cycling, and water purification and recharge. These lands provide food, fiber, and open space, and contribute to the economic viability of local economies through tourism and recreational activities.

### **Authority**

CPGL is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill).

### **Scope**

CPGL is a voluntary program available in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

### **Purpose**

The program provides for timely technical assistance to owners and managers of private grazing land to address resource concerns while enhancing the economic and social

stability of grazing land enterprises and the rural communities that depend upon them.

Under CPGL, NRCS provides technical assistance to landowners and managers who request assistance to voluntarily conserve or enhance their resources to meet ecological, economic, and social demands.

### **Technical Assistance**

NRCS is the technical agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides assistance to conservation districts and individuals in planning and carrying out conservation activities. NRCS provides technical assistance to owners and managers of private grazing land for the long-term productivity and ecological health of grazing land.

The objective of technical assistance on grazing land is to assist landowners and managers in recognizing and understanding the basic ecological principals associated with managing their land. The objective can be met by implementing a plan that meets the needs of the resources (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) and management objectives of the owner or manager.

NRCS may provide assistance, at the request of the landowner or manager, to:

- Maintain and improve private grazing land and its management;
- Implement grazing land management technologies;
- Protect and improve the quality and quantity of water;

- Maintain and improve wildlife and fish habitat;
- Enhance recreational opportunities;
- Maintain and improve the aesthetic character of private grazing land;
- Identify opportunities and encourage diversification; and
- Encourage the use of sustainable grazing systems.

Technical assistance may include the inventory and evaluation of soil, water, animal, plant, air, and other resources. This information will help landowners and managers make land use, environmental, and conservation treatment decisions and help them in applying and maintaining conservation practices.

Technical assistance shall be provided to help land users apply and maintain planned conservation practices. NRCS assistance for applying the conservation practices and systems may include:

- Design, layout, and evaluation of conservation practices;
- Development of management alternatives and cultural practices needed to establish and maintain vegetation; and
- Planning, construction, and maintenance of other conservation practices needed to protect and enhance natural resources.

NRCS shall work with the local conservation district to prioritize requests to ensure that technical assistance is provided in a fair and equitable manner.

### ***Program Participation***

All owners and managers of private grazing land are eligible to receive technical assistance from NRCS. To receive technical assistance, a landowner or manager may contact NRCS or the local conservation district. Participation in this program is voluntary.

### ***For More Information***

If you need more information about CPGL, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

**Note:** This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.