

USDA

Oklahoma FSA State Office

100 USDA, Suite 102

Stillwater, OK 74074

(405) 742-1130



February, 2007

Farm Service Agency

Oklahoma FSA State Newsletter

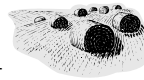
Conservation Reserve Program Participants Newsletter

CRP Maintenance Reminder

Is that an undesirable weed on my CRP or is it a beneficial forb or legume? Maintaining Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract acres is the responsibility of the contract participant. In general, the contract requires the participant to maintain the vegetative cover that was established for the contract, free of any undesirable weeds or trees unless trees were specifically planted on the CRP acreage according to a plan. A list of undesirable weeds can be obtained from the county FSA office if you have weed concerns on the CRP. Oklahoma experienced many wildfires and a severe drought in 2006. These events may have destroyed some of the vegetative cover on CRP acres. Re-establishment of any destroyed cover is the participant's responsibility. Maintenance activities may not occur during the May 1 to July 1 primary nesting season. Concerning wildfires, FSA encourages participants to install firebreaks on CRP. The firebreaks must be installed according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's standards and added to a revised conservation plan.

Hay prices may be high but do not be tempted to hay or graze CRP unless this activity is approved by the local FSA office. Managed hay and graze provisions may allow this activity to occur for a 25% reduction of the annual rental payment per acre. Visit the local FSA office for eligibility to manage hay or graze CRP.

It may be convenient, but storage of any type such as hay, equipment, etc., is not allowed on CRP. Commercial use cannot be made of the acreage. Examples of other unauthorized uses include the application of drilling fluids, municipal waste, livestock waste/by products, etc. The CRP acreage is intended to support the approved vegetative cover to assist with wildlife enhancement, erosion control, and water quality.



CRP participants are to report all commercial or residential developments on CPR prior to the destruction of the CRP vegetative cover (e.g. installation of pipelines, well sites, residential, commercial building sites, etc.) Any activity of this type will require a repayment of previous payments received in the CRP; therefore, it may be beneficial to know the cost of removing this type of land from CRP for your private transaction negotiations.

Recreational hunting, consistent with state law, is permissible except during the May 1 to July 1 nesting season. Contact your local FSA office on any CRP issue to ensure your contract's compliance.

Early Land Preparation on Expiring CRP Contracts



Approximately 165,000 acres will expire from CRP contracts on September 30, 2007. Participants, with expiring CRP acres, may be considering alternate uses for this land. In regard to some favorable commodity prices, it is recognized that participants may want to return the land to agriculture commodity production. The CRP provisions allow a participant to begin early land preparation for fall seeded crops beginning July 1. A request must be filed with the local FSA office on form, CRP-1G Addendum, and approval must be received before any activity can begin. A modified conservation plan must be obtained from NRCS for the activity. There may be specific CRP acres that are not eligible for the early land preparation provisions. The local FSA office can assist you with determining eligible acres. There is no payment reduction associated with the July 1 early land preparation provisions. The fall seeded crop may be planted after September 1. Acreages, utilized for this provision, may not be hayed or grazed or used for any commercial purpose. Haying may occur to remove the cover to assist with the land preparation, but the hay must be destroyed. CRP participants in the Oklahoma Panhandle may begin early land preparation May 1 with a prorated rental rate reduction.

Participants, wanting to plant spring crops (2008) after CRP expiration September 30, 2007, may apply chemicals beginning July 2, 2007. Destruction of the cover by any other means is not permitted, and seedbed preparation is not permitted before the contract expires. The acreage may be mowed (after July 2) before applying chemicals; however, the acreage may not be hayed, grazed, or used for any other commercial purpose. A request must be made to the local FSA office on form, CRP-1G Addendum, to conduct the action along with a revised conservation plan. Certain CRP acres may not be eligible for this provision. A payment reduction will not be applied on this activity. Contact your local FSA office for eligible acres.

Managed Haying and Grazing of CRP

It is not too early to begin plan considerations of whether to utilize the CRP managed haying or grazing options this summer. Managed haying or grazing may benefit the CRP stand by removing some of the cover allowing sunlight to sprout new seeds that will increase the CRP stand density and diversity.



Managed haying or grazing may occur once every three years on a CRP acre on contracts that had exercised managed haying and grazing provisions prior to September 26, 2006. CRP contracts, approved after this date or those that had not previously exercised the managed haying and grazing option, may be grazed once every five years and be hayed once every ten years. A fee equal to 25% of the annual rental rate times the number of acres actually hayed or grazed will apply. A request must be made to the local FSA before any haying or grazing activity begins. The managed hay period is July 2 through August 10. All haying activities must be completed within this timeframe. The managed grazing period is July 2 through October 29. Not all CRP acres are eligible to be managed hayed or grazed. Visit with your local FSA office on eligible acres and additional provisions.

Wind Turbines on CRP



Wind turbines may dot some of the Oklahoma landscape as a source of environmentally friendly electric generation. The installation of windmills, wind turbines, wind monitoring towers, or other wind powered generation equipment may be allowed on CRP acreage once approved by the local FSA Committee. Up to five acres may be devoted to wind turbines considering environmental impacts. Requests, for greater than five acres, must be approved at the national level. Contact the local FSA office before contracting with a company to install wind generating equipment on CRP for clarifications and the impact of these contract provisions.

Voluntary and Required Management of CRP Acres

The 2002 Farm Bill allowed management activities to be performed on CRP acres with cost-share assistance. Any CRP contract, entered into during signup 26 or a later signup, had required management practices that must be included in their CRP Conservation Plan. Producers, with CRP contracts in effect before signup 26, may elect to do management activities voluntarily with cost share provided three years remain on the contract. There are a minimum number of years a contract must be in CRP to be eligible for cost share on management practices, which is based on what type of vegetative cover exists on the CRP.

Management activities include mowing, burning, and light disking, or roller chopping the CRP acreage. Fertilizer is allowed on some introduced grass stands if required by a soil test. Management activities are intended to assist in increasing the density of the stand and encourage stand diversity.



Signup 26 CRP contracts, with a program effective date of October 1, 2003 that consists of introduced grass covers, may be required to do a required management practice in 2007. Required or voluntary management activities must be completed between February 1 and April 1.

Contact the local FSA office to inquire if your CRP contract is eligible for this activity and prior to beginning any activity on CRP.

Visit our web site at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/ok

