

**For:** State and County Offices

**Preparing for CRP General Signup 45**

**Approved by:** Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

On February 16, 2013, the Secretary announced that general CRP signup 45 will be held from May 20, 2013, through June 14, 2013. CRP participants with contracts expiring on September 30, 2013, or producers with land that is not currently enrolled in CRP, may submit offers. Accepted contracts for CRP signup 45 will become effective on October 1, 2013.

For signup 45, FSA will use the environmental benefits index (EBI) to rank offers for selection. The Tool for Environmental Resource Results Assessment (TERRA) and the Conservation Online System (COLS) must be used for general signup 45. These tools will use similar databases, soils, CPA's, zones, etc., that were used for previous general signups.

**B Setting Priorities**

State and County Offices shall set workload priorities and plan office activities accordingly to ensure timely program implementation.

**C Purpose**

This notice provides:

- instructions for using software tools
- signature requirements and the deadline for CRP-1's
- policy for approved conservation plans
- information about letters being sent to producers with expiring contracts
- other general information.

| <b>Disposal Date</b> | <b>Distribution</b>                                  |
|----------------------|--|
| October 1, 2013      | State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices |

## Notice CRP-733

### 2 Pre-Signup Activities for General Signup 45

#### A Preparing for Signup

County Offices will use TERRA and COLS to process offers for general signup 45. To assist State and County Offices in preparing for general signup 45, the following pre-populated files have been provided:

- CPA's and conservation priority zone tables for signup 43 shall continue to be used for signup 45
- look-up tables for EBI sub-factors N2b, N2c, and N5a, established for signup 43 shall continue to be used for signup 45.

#### B Soils in the Soils Data Management System (SDMS)

SDMS is maintained by the State Office. In preparation for signup 45, State Offices should work with NRCS State Soil Scientist staff to ensure that all soils data within SDMS are complete and accurate.

- Each soil type must have all soil attributes and SRR before it can be used by TERRA and COLS during signup.
- To support accurate soils determinations State Offices must consult with NRCS's State Soil Scientist staff to review changes in soil survey and CRP soils data made by NRCS since signup 43 which may warrant updates to SDMS records.
- State Offices will complete any edits to soil attributes in SDMS at <https://arcticocean.sc.egov.usda.gov/soilDbMgnt/SoilWelcome.do>.
- Soils in SDMS that are not likely to ever be cropped, i.e. water, barren, or dam soil map units, may be voided by the State Office upon consultation with NRCS State Soil Scientist staff.
- The National Office is currently working with State Offices to update SRR's used for CRP according to Notices CRP-730 and CRP-732. After SRR's have been updated, State Offices shall instruct County Offices to print the Posting Reports for their county from SDMS and post for display according to 2-CRP, subparagraph 104 A.

**Note:** Updated SRR's will be pre-loaded by the National Office to SDMS according to Notice CRP-732. If a soil map unit is not listed in the database at that time, SRR will not be loaded by the National Office, and the State Office will need to ensure that the data is entered before signup begins.

If there are questions about SDMS, contact Jean Agapoff by either of the following:

- e-mail at [jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov](mailto:jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov)
- telephone at 530-792-5594.

## Notice CRP-733

### 2 Pre-Signup Activities for General Signup 45 (Continued)

#### C Producer Notifications

Letter notifications will be sent by the National Office the week of March 4, 2013, to **all** participants with general and continuous signup CRP-1's scheduled to expire on September 30, 2013.

See:

- Exhibit 1 for an example of the coversheet for notification letters
- Exhibit 2 for an example of the expiring general and continuous signup notification letter.

The mailing list of CRP notification letters sent to CRP participants will be posted no later than March 8, 2013, on CEPD's SharePoint site at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/states/cepd/crp/g45/default.aspx>.

### 3 WRP and 25 Percent County Cropland Limits

#### A Updating WRP Acres

The National Office will post State tables of physical county WRP acres by COB March 1, 2013. The WRP State tables will be published on CEPD's SharePoint site at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/states/cepd/crp/g45/default.aspx>.

Each State Office shall download its WRP State table spreadsheet, which includes columns for current physical county WRP acres and a blank revised WRP cropland acres column for the State Office to complete.

State Offices are to contact County Offices and verify the accuracy of the **WRP cropland** acres for each physical county in the table. The WRP acres provided in the table for review are based on PECD data, which may include noncropland WRP. Revised acre totals of **only cropland** WRP are to be included on the table.

**Note:** Revisions to the WRP acres on the spreadsheet require local FSA and NRCS concurrence.

State Offices must submit a completed WRP State table of all physical county WRP cropland acres, including updated county totals, to CEPD by COB March 22, 2013. Submissions **must** be sent to Jean Agapoff by e-mail at [jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov](mailto:jean.agapoff@ca.usda.gov).

#### B County Cropland Limit Report

The updated 25 Percent County Cropland Limit Report will be posted on CEPD's SharePoint site at <https://fsa.sc.egov.usda.gov/states/cepd/crp/default.aspx>.

## Notice CRP-733

### 3 WRP and 25 Percent County Cropland Limits (Continued)

#### C County Cropland Limit Waivers

All existing 25 percent county cropland limitation waivers previously approved will be extended for general signup 45.

### 4 Required Practice Information for Conservation Plan

#### A Job Sheets

2-CRP, subparagraph 66 B will be amended to provide a list of eligible conservation practices and their CRP-1 length for signup 45. When developing the conservation plan, State Conservation Program Specialists must work with the NRCS State CRP Program Manager to update or develop job sheets by practice, to provide County Offices seeding practice requirements for all signup 45 practices.

**Note:** It is possible that multiple job sheets could be needed if there is a variance because of soil properties, moisture regimes, etc., that would impact planting requirements.

As part of these job sheets, State Offices shall request soil limitations for suitable vegetation by practice that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- grasses
- legumes
- forbs
- shrubs
- trees.

These tables must list the factors, salinity, water table, depth to bedrock, etc., that would limit planting decisions or practice options for CRP.

**Example:** Depth to bedrock may limit potential to plant CP3A, hardwood trees, on a site. County Office personnel must have soil limitation data to ensure that all practices listed with CRP offers have suitable soil types.

**Note:** Longleaf pine suitability index information is recorded for each map unit symbol in SDMS and is automatically applied by the TERRA and COLS offer system.

## Notice CRP-733

### 4 Required Practice Information for Conservation Plan (Continued)

#### A Job Sheets (Continued)

These job sheets should include a minimum of the following:

- seedbed and site preparation
- timing of seeding or planting
- fertilization requirements
- weed control
- varieties of seed or planting material
- amount of seeding or planting
- maintenance requirements for the practice
- soil limitations
- management measures by practice.

#### B Cost Estimates for Practices

For the “new offer” COLS process, FSA established a cost for each practice to be used for the total estimated practice cost for each offer. County Offices shall update or establish an estimated total C/S amount using flat rate C/S rates for components that accurately reflect the average per acre cost of installing the whole practice. Do **not** use “not to exceed” rates when establishing this cost. This cost data will be used in the COLS software to print the total **estimated** cost on CRP-1.

### 5 Conservation Plan Provisions for Signup 45

#### A Conservation Plan Completion

A conservation plan must be completed no later than September 1, 2013.

**Notes:** Participants must be notified that starting a practice before approval of CRP-1 is at their own risk. C/S will only be paid for those eligible costs that are approved under the conservation plan.

The specifications for all applicable practices shall be included in the approved conservation plan according to 2-CRP.

Interim conservation plans are **not** authorized for signup 45. An approved conservation plan must be completed and signed before CRP-1 may be approved.

## Notice CRP-733

### 6 Signup 45 Signature Requirements

#### A Requirements

To ensure CRP-1's for general signup 45 are approved by September 30, 2013, **all** participants are strongly encouraged to sign and date CRP-1 no later than COB September 13, 2013.

**Note:** See 2-CRP, paragraph 335 for signature requirements during signup.

### 7 Action

#### A State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- make preparation for CRP general signup a high priority when setting workload priorities and scheduling office activities
- follow the provisions of this notice
- ensure that County Offices follow the provisions of this notice.

#### B County Office Action

County Offices shall:

- make preparation for CRP general signup a high priority when setting workload priorities and scheduling office activities
- follow the provisions of this notice.

Example of the Cover Sheet for the Notification Letters

**SMITH COUNTY FSA OFFICE  
123 MAIN ST  
COUNTY ST 12345-6543**

**PHONE #: 555-555-5555**

**JOHN DOE  
9876 COUNTY ROAD  
COUNTY ST 12345-9876**

| <b>Administrative<br/>State/County</b> | <b>CRP Contract<br/>Number</b> | <b>Contract<br/>Acres</b> | <b>Farm<br/>Number</b> | <b>Contract<br/>Type</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>ST-COUNTY</b>                       | <b>0790 B</b>                  | <b>0.9</b>                | <b>5555</b>            | <b>Continuous</b>        |
| <b>ST-COUNTY</b>                       | <b>0790 B</b>                  | <b>3.9</b>                | <b>5555</b>            | <b>General</b>           |

Example of the Expiring General and Continuous Signup Notification Letter



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

February X, 2013

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

Dear CRP Participant:

Farm Service  
Agency

Your Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract expires on September 30, 2013. Information specific to your expiring CRP contract(s) is on the reverse side of this letter. You have the following options:

Deputy  
Administrator for  
Farm Programs

1400 Independence  
Ave, SW  
Stop 0513  
Washington, DC  
20250-0513

1. **If you have a general CRP contract, you may submit an offer to re-enroll all or a portion of your expiring contract acres into a new CRP contract during the CRP general signup from May 20 through June 14, 2013.** If accepted, you will be eligible to receive a 10- to 15- year contract that would become effective on October 1, 2013. Also, check to see if your land is eligible for a continuous CRP contract. You will be required to have a new conservation plan and meet adjusted gross income requirements and all other eligibility requirements before the contract can be approved.
2. **If you have a continuous CRP contract, you may re-enroll your acreage before September 30, 2013.** Your contract will be accepted, if your land meets all eligibility requirements. You will be eligible to receive a 10- to 15- year contract that would become effective on October 1, 2013. You will be required to have a new conservation plan and meet adjusted gross income requirements and all other eligibility requirements before the contract can be approved.
3. **If you do nothing, your CRP contract will expire.** You will receive your final payment in October of 2013. You may plant, graze or hay the acreage after September 30, 2013. Before planting, check to see if your land may be subject to conservation and wetland compliance provisions. You may also be eligible to apply for early release of CRP acres, which would allow you to prepare the land for planting before September 30, 2013. Prior to contract expiration, you should visit with your local Farm Service Agency office and review the current crop acreage base re-instatement provisions. After contract expiration, it may be possible to have some or all of your crop acreage bases re-instated for future farm program usage. Expired CRP contract acres that were devoted to trees will no longer be considered cropland and may be ineligible for subsequent CRP contracts and other farm programs.

Please contact your local Farm Service Agency office, or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) for further information.

Sincerely,

Juan M. Garcia  
Administrator



USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer