

Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Director Dan Steinkruger announced recently that Nebraska FSA will hold a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup from May 20 through June 14.

“Producers and landowners are urged to take action now in considering the environmental and financial benefits of CRP as the signup period is only four weeks and it is anticipated that this may be the only opportunity to enroll in General CRP for several years,” said Steinkruger.

“CRP is an important program in Nebraska for protecting environmentally sensitive land from erosion and sedimentation, improving air quality and ensuring the sustainability of our groundwater, lakes and rivers. CRP helps protect Nebraska’s natural resources, preserve wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation related to hunting and fishing,” said Steinkruger.

“Nebraska participants currently have over 900,000 acres enrolled in CRP and earn nearly \$60 million in annual rental payments per year.”

To be eligible, a producer must have owned or operated the offered acreage for at least 12 months prior to the end of the sign-up period (with some exceptions).

The land must be cropland planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2002 to 2007 and be physically and legally capable of being planted.

Offers for new acreage and acreage already in CRP but expiring on Sept. 30, 2013 will be considered. Offers will be ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). A cutoff score will determine offers accepted.

FSA provides 50 percent cost-share assistance to establish the conservation cover and an annual rental payment based on the productivity of the soils and the average dryland cash rent value. Rental rates were recently updated in Nebraska and increased substantially in many counties.

Steinkruger encouraged producers and landowners to also look into CRP’s other enrollment opportunities, including Continuous CRP, State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiative, the Highly Erodible Land Initiative, the Pollinator Habitat Initiative, and the Platte-Republican CREP. These programs are open on a continuous, non-competitive basis and provide even further financial opportunities and incentives.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit your local FSA Service Center or www.fsa.usda.gov.