

NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Farm Service Agency
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USDA ENCOURAGES LANDOWNERS TO LOOK AT OPTIONS WITH GRP

INDIANAPOLIS, June 9, 2009—USDA conservation agencies in Indiana encourage landowners to look at their options within the Grassland Reserve Program, a conservation program that was continued in The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill).

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners and operators protect, restore, and enhance eligible grassland, including pastureland, shrubland, and rangeland. This conservation program emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conservation.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) jointly administer this program.

“Though GRP is on a continuous sign-up basis, to be ranked for fiscal year 2009 funding, applications must be sent to USDA's national headquarters by June 26, 2009,” said NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. “This means that interested landowners need to contact their local USDA Service Center now to get their applications ready in time.”

The 2008 Farm Bill requires a grazing management plan for participants. The Bill also provides priority for enrollment of expiring acreage from the Conservation Reserve Program, limited to 10 percent of the total acres enrolled in any year.

USDA requires a minimum acreage of 18 continuous acres to apply in GRP. Landowners can apply for GRP assistance through rental contracts or conservation easements.

Rental contracts can be 10, 15, or 20 year contracts; and the rates are \$16.50 per acre per year. For rental contracts, applicants must provide proof of ownership or control of the land for the length of the contract.

Easements are permanent and will be considered at the appraised value, not to exceed \$5,000 per acre. Only landowners can apply for easements on their property. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. For more information, go to the Indiana NRCS Web site at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/GRP.html>.

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