

## FSA Announces General CRP Signup to Begin March 12

Tahlequah, Okla. – Gary Rogers, executive director for the Farm Service Agency in Cherokee, Adair and Sequoyah Counties announced Wednesday, Feb. 15 that a four-week Conservation Reserve Program general signup will begin on March 12 and end on April 6. During the signup period, farmers and ranchers interested in offering land under the competitive general signup are encouraged to contact Cherokee, Adair and Sequoyah counties' FSA office.

“For 25 years CRP has generated significant environmental improvements,” said Rogers. “Sound conservation practices encouraged through CRP enrollment preserve the soil, clean our water and restore habitat for wildlife. I encourage all interested farmers and ranchers to contact the county FSA office to learn more about this opportunity.”

CRP is a voluntary program that assists farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers to use their environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolling in CRP plant long-term, elected vegetation covers in exchange for rental payments, cost-share and technical assistance. Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years.

Cropland currently not enrolled in CRP and previously expired CRP contract acres may be offered in this signup, provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2012.

FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits) and cost. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the signup ends April 6 and after analyzing the EBI data of all the offers.

In addition to general signup, CRP's continuous signup program will be ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land.

For more information on the conservation reserve program, please visit the Cherokee, Adair and Sequoyah counties' FSA office or go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/ok](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ok).

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