



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM SIGNUP ANNOUNCED

Jackson, MS, December 13, 2010 - USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced a signup for the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). The signup is continuous, but all applications meeting the eligibility requirements that have been submitted by close of business on January 7, 2011, will be ranked and considered for the 2011 funding. The program is for working grazing lands and land that is enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that is established in grass with the contract set to expire within the next 12 months.

"GRP is a voluntary program that helps protect valuable grasslands from conversion to other land uses, thus helping to ensure this national resource is available to future generations," stated Dr. Homer L. Wilkes, Mississippi State Conservationist for NRCS. "Enrollment of land in GRP will have a positive economic impact and improve environmental quality by preventing the conversion of grassland to other uses, including crop production and urban development." Grassland is vital for the production of forage for domestic livestock and provides essential habitat elements for maintaining healthy wildlife populations.

Applicants may select to enroll under the permanent easement option or for a rental contract of 10, 15, or 20-year duration. There is no minimum acreage that must be enrolled by a participant in the program and the 2008 Farm Bill limits annual payments for rental contracts in GRP to a maximum of \$50,000.

Administration of GRP is a coordinated effort between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). NRCS is the lead agency responsible for technical assistance, regulatory compliance, and easement administration, while FSA has the lead responsibility for the administration of the rental contracts and financial activities of the program.

Landowners and producers interested in participation in GRP may apply at any time at their local USDA Service Center NRCS office. All applications submitted by close of business on January 7, 2011 will be ranked in the first ranking cut-off and considered for the 2011 funding, providing the participant meets the eligibility requirements.

For additional information on the 2011 GRP signup, contact your local USDA Service Center or visit our website at www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/Grassland%20Reserve%20Program.html.

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