

**Fact Sheet****Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands****Overview**

The Bottomland (hardwood) Timber Establishment on Wetlands initiative is a new effort under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that works to improve air and water quality as well as increase wildlife habitat along wetland areas. The initiative allows producers to enroll in a CRP practice on lands suitable for growing bottomland hardwood trees or adapted shrubs that will provide multipurpose forest and wildlife benefits.

The Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands initiative is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) through CRP, a voluntary program that helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally sensitive land.

Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for 14 to 15 years.

Producers can enroll in CRP for the Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands initiative anytime through continuous CRP sign-up. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Offers for continuous sign-up are not subject to competitive bidding. More information is available in the

FSA fact sheet "Conservation Reserve Program - Continuous Sign-up."

Producers in all U.S. states and territories are eligible to participate in the initiative.

Goals

The purpose of the initiative is to establish a stand of trees that will:

- Control sheet, rill, scour, and other erosion;
- Reduce water, air, or land pollution;
- Restore and enhance the natural and beneficial functions of wetlands;
- Promote carbon sequestration; and
- Restore and connect wildlife habitat.

Acres Limit

The total acres allowed nationwide for the initiative is 500,000 acres. Every U.S. state has specified acreage limits.

Ownership Eligibility Requirements

An owner is eligible to offer land for enrollment for this CRP initiative if the owner meets one of the following requirements:

- Owned the land for 12 months prior to filing for enrollment;
- Acquired the land by will or succession as a result of death;

- Acquired the land under circumstances other than for placement in CRP, as determined by the FSA National Office.

Ownership eligibility requirements are satisfied if there is any combination of continuously leasing and owning by the same "person" during the 12-month period before filing for enrollment.

Eligibility for Operators

An operator is eligible to offer land for enrollment in CRP when the operator meets both of the following requirements:

- Operated the land for 12 months before filing for enrollment; and
- Provides satisfactory evidence, as determined by the County Committee (COC), that control of the land will continue uninterrupted for the contract period.

Satisfactory evidence may include any of the following:

- Statement signed by the owner;
- Written lease for the appropriate time period; or
- Owner's signature on the CRP contract.

Operator eligibility requirements shall be satisfied if there is any combination of leasing and owning by the same "person" during the 12-month period before filing for enrollment.

Cropping History Requirements

Eligible cropland enrollment in the CRP Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands initiative includes cropland that is both of the following:

- Planted, COC-approved pre-vented planted, or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during any 4 of the 6 crop years, 1996 through 2001.

Acreage for which a producer received a crop insurance indemnity payment for pre-vented planting shall be considered planted for that year for CRP cropping history purposes.

Field margins that are incidental to the planting of crops, such as turnrows, field borders, and center pivot corners, are eligible to be offered. Field margins do not include other areas within a field.

Acreage that received planted and considered planted credit for crop acreage base protection is considered planted for purposes of CRP cropland eligibility.

- Physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity in a normal manner during a normal cropping season.

COC's determination must be based on whether the cropland could be planted to an agricultural commodity in a normal manner during a normal cropping

season. Acreage permanently under water is ineligible to be offered for enrollment.

Sign-up

Beginning Dec. 1, 2003, producers can enroll in the Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands initiative through CRP. For continuous sign-up, the effective date of the CRP contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval. In certain circumstances, producers may defer the effective date for up to 6 months.

If the acreage is currently under CRP contract and is within one year of the scheduled expiration date, the effective date is October 1 following the expiration date.

Payment Example

A producer enrolls 10 acres of eligible land the initiative. The weighted average soil rental rate for the 3 predominant soils is \$50 per acre. The producer is eligible to receive the following annual rental payment:

\$50 per acre + \$5 (maintenance rate) per acre = \$55 per acre.
Total annual rental payment = \$550 per year (\$55 per acre times 10 acres).

Cost-share Assistance

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance can be an amount not more than 50 percent of the participants' costs in establishing approved practices.

For More Information

For more information on this and other FSA programs, contact your local FSA office or visit FSA's Web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov

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