

Conservation Reserve Program sign-up set for July 18 through August 5

This is a dynamic program that allows Louisa County landowners to place, under contract, land that is declared highly erodible or is considered marginal. The land will be "rented" by the USDA for 10 years at a fixed price per acre. The last signup period, bids were accepted up to \$105 per acre. If you are interested, the bid submitted should be what you feel is necessary to seed those acres for a 10 year period.

Once accepted into CRP, the land may be treated in many different ways. It may be permanently seeded to grass or to native grasses (switchgrass, indiangrass, etc.), planted to trees, or used as wildlife for food plots. The ASCS office will cost-share up to \$44-ac. for the establishment of grasses, \$96-ac. for the establishment of native grasses, and \$165-ac. for the planting of trees and wildlife habitats. This price includes the cost of seed, fertilizer, lime, and land preparation.

With the 1985 Farm Bill and the conservation compliance provision, farmers and landowners will be required to put down in writing their intentions to farm their highly erodible land in a conservation manner. The CRP program will qualify as an approved conservation plan. Also with the drought this year, \$105-ac. guaranteed will relieve many fears of a failed crop and help cash flow difficulties. If the CRP program doesn't fit your operation, please come into our office so you can develop a conservation plan before the 1990 deadline. Also if you have not received your farm maps and highly erodible land determination from the Wapello SCS office, come in and let us know so we can get this information to you.

If you are interested in the CRP program, the next signup period is from July 18th thru August 5th. You will need to have the ACSC office develop a cropping history, telling us

what has been grown on that particular piece of ground. Generally speaking, the land needs to have been row cropped 2 years between 1981 and 1985. The SCS will then determine which fields will qualify. You will then leave your bid (\$-ac.) with ASCS. After the signup period is over, the ASCS county committee will open the bids and decide which ones to accept. Once accepted, you will then need to develop a seeding plan stating what you will seed or plant on these acres. This seeding plan is your conservation plan for compliance to the 1985 Farm Bill. The ASCS makes annual payments in the

fall of each year. After your land is seeded, you will need to mow it 2 times the 1st year. After that you only need to mow if your land becomes weedy. When your land comes out of CRP, you will need to develop a conservation plan on that land to remain in compliance with the 1985 Farm Bill if you wish to crop it.

The CRP program is a good option for landowners with highly erodible land. If you are interested in CRP, stop in our office at 222 North 2nd Street in Wapello before August 5th.

Todd Meyer
Louisa County
Soil Conservationist

Wapello
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