



# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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## Dates for CRP General Signup Announced

Athens, Georgia, Feb. 8, 2011 - Hobby Stripling, Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Georgia announced a general signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will begin on March 14, 2011, and continue through April 15, 2011. During the signup period, farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

"Over the past 25 years, CRP's benefits have grown thanks to many unexpected, but welcomed improvements to our natural resources — cleaner water, improved air quality, better habitat for wildlife, viewing opportunities of that wildlife and of course, a huge reduction in soil erosion," said Stripling. "Today's announcement will help this administration continue its strong conservation legacy."

Land currently not enrolled in CRP 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, 2011.

To help ensure that interested farmers and ranchers are aware of the signup period, USDA has signed partnership agreements with several conservation and wildlife organizations that will all play an active role in USDA's 2011 CRP outreach efforts.

FSA, which administers the CRP, will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that shows the 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 sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI data of all the offers.

In addition to the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. For more information, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

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