

News Release

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
United State Department of Agriculture
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Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Sign-up Announced

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) is accepting applications for funding on a continuous basis for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). According to Eric B. Banks, State Conservationist for USDA-NRCS in Kansas, the 2008 Farm Bill provided for a continuous sign-up to allow eligible entities more opportunities to sign-up eligible parcels. "We changed the Kansas Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program designating all counties as eligible counties for FRPP," Banks said. "Only eligible entities may submit applications for eligible farm and ranch land."

Eligible entities are state, tribal, or local governments and non-government organizations that have an established farm and ranch land protection program, have the authority to hold and manage easements; have the capacity to acquire, manage, and enforce the easements; and the funds to match the federal contribution.

Landowners interested in FRPP will need to work with eligible entities in submitting applications. Eligible entities must submit applications on or before May 22, 2009, to receive consideration for funding in Fiscal Year 2009. Funds must be obligated by July 15, 2009.

Land proposed for funding in FRPP must meet one of three eligibility categories: contain at least 50 percent prime and unique farmland soils and soils of statewide and local importance; contain historic or archeological resources; or contain land that supports the farm and ranch land protection policies of state or local programs.

Owners of the parcels must have an adjusted gross income of less than \$1 million and be in compliance with the USDA highly erodible land and wetland compliance requirements.

Application must be made by the eligible entities to the NRCS State Office in Salina, Kansas. Applications will be evaluated to make sure both the entities and landowners meet minimum eligibility requirements.

Individual parcels will be evaluated for eligibility and quality; the highest quality parcels will be selected for funding. The ranking and selection of parcels will take place immediately after May 22, 2009.

Ranking criteria can be obtained at the Kansas NRCS Web site
http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/kansas_frpp.html.

NRCS will obligate funding for the selected parcels in a cooperative agreement with the eligible entities that submitted the selected parcel.

According to Banks, FRPP in Kansas has enrolled over 14,000 acres on 12 farms and ranches since Congress reauthorized the program in 2002. For further information, contact Jeffrey L. Gross, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources, at 785-823-4550 or jeff.gross@ks.usda.gov.

More information about Natural Resources Conservation Service and other conservation programs is available on the NRCS Web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov or at your nearest USDA Service Center.