

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Sign-Up Set for April 6

A sign-up approval date has been set for April 6, 2012, for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)," announced Eric B. Banks, State Conservationist for NRCS in Kansas.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides matching funds through the FRPP to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranch lands in agricultural uses. Working through FRPP, the USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements on private lands. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

"In 2011, NRCS provided \$410,733 in matching funds to enroll 1,774 acres in the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program," said Banks.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants (eligible entities) must be a federally recognized Indian Tribes, state, or local unit of government, or a non-governmental organization. Applicants must have an established farmland protection program that purchases agricultural conservation easements for the purpose of protecting agriculture use and related conservation values by limiting conversion to nonagricultural uses of the land.

To be eligible to receive FRPP funding, applicants must demonstrate a commitment to long-term conservation of agricultural lands; a capability to acquire, manage, and enforce easements; a sufficient number of staff dedicated to monitoring and easement stewardship; and the availability of funds.

Eligible Lands

Eligible land must be privately owned, farm or ranch lands contain at least 50 percent prime, unique, statewide, or locally important farmland soils; have a historical or archaeological resource; or have land that supports the policy of a state or local farm and ranch lands protection program. The land must also be part of a pending offer by an eligible entity; have cropland, rangeland, grassland, pasture land, or forest land that contributes to the economic viability of an agricultural operation, or serves as a buffer to protect an agricultural operation from development.

"Eligible entities must submit applications on or before April 6, 2012, to be reviewed for funding consideration," states Banks. The individual farms and ranches are evaluated and ranked individually and funds are obligated to the eligible entities associated with the highest ranked farms and ranches through a cooperative agreement.

For More Information

If you need more information about FRPP, visit the Kansas NRCS web page at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/index.html or contact your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the internet at offices.usda.gov). Follow us on Twitter at @NRCS_Kansas.

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