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Feds Reassure Farmers over Lesser Prairie Chicken

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) - Federal authorities are reassuring Kansas farmers and other landowners that the listing of the lesser prairie chicken as a threatened species won't affect their ability to enter or exit the Conservation Reserve Program.

The Agriculture Department's Kansas Farm Service Agency office says producers participating in CRP in the 39 lesser prairie chicken counties in Kansas are planting native grasses and vegetation that will enhance nesting and brooding habitats.

The agency said in a news release Wednesday that the landowners have already taken steps to protect the species. As a result, the agency says, they're exempt from participating in CRP under an agreement between FSA and federal wildlife regulators.

State FSA Director Adrian Polansky says producers using proactive conservation practices can be confident that they can maintain traditional farming and ranching activities.