

Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Pollinator Habitats in Continuous CRP

Adrian J. Polansky, State Executive Director of the Kansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that pollinator habitats, which support a variety of pollinator species, will now be accepted as a Continuous Sign-up Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) practice. CCRP is a voluntary program that helps producers apply conservation practices to safeguard environmentally sensitive land.

Pollinator habitats are areas of permanent vegetation located in an agricultural landscape: field edges, field middles, odd corners, or any agricultural location that is suitable for establishing pollinator habitat.

Pollinators provide a very important ecological service. Approximately three quarters of all flowering plants rely upon external assistance to pollinate their flowers. In addition to agricultural crops such as fruits and many vegetables, these plants include seed producing wildflowers, fruit producing shrubs and nut producing trees which provide a source of food for many wildlife species. Studies indicate that birds, bees, bats, and other pollinators are in significant decline across the country and around the world. Nearly 80% of the crops grown in the world require pollination. In the United States, insects pollinate crops that produce \$40 billion worth of products annually.

Participants of newly enrolled pollinator habitat practices are eligible to receive a \$150 CRP Sign-up Incentive Payment (SIP) per acre. The SIP is a one-time payment issued to CRP participants after the contract is approved. The following practices qualify for the \$150 SIP:

- Pollinator Habitats;
- Wetland Restoration & Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain) practice which restores the functions and values of wetland ecosystems that have been devoted to agricultural use and;
- Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds practice which provides food and cover for quail and upland birds in cropland areas. The SIP for all other continuous sign-up practices remains unchanged at \$100 per acre.

Continuous CRP sign-up allows participants to submit offers for selected CCRP practices to enroll in CRP at anytime instead of waiting for a General CRP sign-up period. Participants and offered lands must meet certain eligibility requirements to be accepted into the program.

For more information about the continuous conservation reserve program, please contact your local FSA county office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ks.