



Louisiana Commodities and Conservation Newsletter February 2020; Issue-2

CRP Transition Incentives Program

Commonly referred to as the CRP-TIP. Under the 2018 Farm Bill, \$50 million per year is authorized for years 2019 through 2023. The program provides an opportunity for Historically Underserved Farmer (HUF) to access land. CRP land becomes TIP eligible two years before contract expiration. The program provides

- Two years of extra CRP rental payments to owners when they sell or agree to lease the land (at least for five years) to HUF for land that is returning to production – HUF in this case cannot be a family member
- Option for the HUF to enroll part of the land to CRP through general signup
- Option to enroll in CSP or EQIP
- The farmer (HUF) has to commit to implementing
 - a. Sustainable grazing practices, or
 - b. Resource conserving cropping systems, or
 - c. Transition to organic production.

INDUSTRY NEWS!!

- US GAO is opening a review of the Presidents farmer-bailout program related to trade mitigation assistance, citing unfair allocations.
- Most recent Louisiana Management of Water Resources audit report cites excessive groundwater withdrawals as a potential concern for the state.
- NRCS signup period for EQIP and RCPP-EQIP ends March 6, 2020.

CRP general signup ends soon!

With new changes introduced in the 2018 Farm Bill, farmers can bid to enroll either whole farms or partial

fields under the general sign-up. About 7 million acres can be enrolled. Signup will be open until Feb 28, 2020. [An interactive map showing the average rental rate by the parish for 2020 is available at the link \(https://bit.ly/2P2tEFd\).](https://bit.ly/2P2tEFd)

Navigable Waters Protection Rule- Agricultural Waters

For the agricultural community, clarification and definitions are provided in the new rule to help determine jurisdiction.

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Not Jurisdictional</i>	<i>Jurisdictional</i>
Ditches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upland ditches, regardless of flow • continues the exemption of maintenance of irrigation ditches from permitting • continues the provision that the burden of proof lies with the agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfy flow conditions under the <i>tributary</i> definition, and constructed in or relocated a tributary • built-in an adjacent wetland and provide flow to navigable waters
Prior converted cropland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land left idle for agricultural or conservation purposes for any number of years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land not used for agricultural purposes in the past five years and reverts to wetlands and meets the condition of adjacent wetlands

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Not Jurisdictional</i>	<i>Jurisdictional</i>
Artificially irrigated areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakes, ponds, & water storage reservoirs constructed in upland even when there is a surface water connection to a downstream jurisdictional water • Flooded agricultural fields that revert to upland when irrigation ceases 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundwater • Subsurface drainage systems, e.g., Tile drains • Ephemeral streams • Gullies & rills 	

The above table only covers some of the exemptions included for agricultural purposes in the new rule.

[A photo appendix of jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional waters is available at this link \(https://bit.ly/3211vUa\)](https://bit.ly/3211vUa)

Water Quality Initiatives

The two successful water quality initiatives are the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative, MRBI for short, and the National Water Quality Initiative. Since its launch in 2009, MRBI projects resulted in conservation on nearly 1.5 million acres. Nutrient loss practices resulted in about 18 million pounds of fertilizer runoff prevention. The NRCS in 2021 will make available \$17.5 million to producers in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and ten other states.

Budget 2021 – Agriculture

The president’s budget proposal includes -

- nearly \$7 million to help farmers and ranchers resolve financial disputes related to USDA farm loans, conservation programs, and other issues
- \$2 million in research grants for farm business management

The budget proposal also includes saving estimates by reducing subsidies, eliminating and streamlining Farm Bill programs. Over the next decade, the expected savings from agriculture-related programs are estimated at \$58 billion. Some of them include -

- \$25 billion by reducing crop insurance subsidies
- \$6.4 billion by eliminating redundant Farm Bill programs
- \$9.1 billion by streamlining conservation programs

Questions and comments:

Dr. Naveen Adusumilli; 225-578-2727; nadusumilli@agcenter.lsu.edu

Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.