

United States Department of Agriculture



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June 3, 2004

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-4-30

SUBJECT: LTP – GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM

Purpose: To provide additional information on the 2004 Grassland Reserve Program.

Expiration date: September 30, 2004.

Attached to this bulletin is a news release for the FY2004 Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). This release indicates that the interim final rule has been published and is open for public comment through July 20, 2004. The complete interim rule and information to provide comments can be found on the national home page at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp>.

We have received a 2004 state allocation of \$905,000 for this program. This amount is similar to the 2003 funding level when 18 contracts were approved enrolling 2295 acres. Prior to announcing a Minnesota GRP sign-up period, the state committee needs to develop a scoring and ranking process. We expect that process to be different from the 2003 criteria due to significant changes in the published rule. Our proposed time frame is to develop the ranking procedures in June, announce and carry out a 4 week sign-up period in July and select contracts for approval by mid-August.

The state office still has copies of over 400 GRP applications from 2003 that were deferred due to lack of funds. These applications will be returned to their originating field office along with a generic letter inviting these applicants to re-submit their application based on the revised scoring process in the published rule.

All field staff needs to be knowledgeable on this program, the opportunity it presents to landowners in your county, and be capable of taking program applications. GRP remains a jointly administered program by both FSA and NRCS. Both agencies will take program sign-up and provide interested applicants program information. NRCS is responsible to develop and approve conservation plans and program contracts. FSA is responsible to issue payments and track funding

Direct questions related to the GRP to Paul Flynn, State Resource Conservationist at 651-602-7870.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

Attachment

Dist: AO
FO
Greg Anderson, FSA, St. Paul, MN