



## GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM

The Grassland Reserve Program, GRP, assists landowners and operators in protecting, restoring, and enhancing grassland, including pastureland, hay land, and certain other lands.

This program emphasizes support for grazing operations and permanent hay land operations that are interested in enhancement and biodiversity of the plants and animals on their operation. The program also emphasizes support for the protection of grasslands that are under the threat of conversion.

Applicants can apply to the GRP for a 10, 15, or 20-year rental agreement or a permanent easement.



### **Application Process:**

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. However, if you're interested in being considered for funding in 2013, you may need to submit an application to your local USDA Service Center as early as October 1, 2012. Either NRCS or FSA will accept your application.

This is a cooperative program between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). FSA will manage your contract if you're selected for funding. FSA will also be making the annual payments for rental agreements. NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan to restore and enhance your pasture and/or hay land, and rank your application. NRCS will also work with landowners through the entire process of acquiring a GRP easement.

You will need to create or update your farm records with FSA if you have not done so already. An appointment with FSA may be required to complete this step.

After you've submitted your application, NRCS field staff will make an appointment to meet with you on your land to rank your application. Your application will be ranked with all other Vermont eligible applications. Those applications that are achieving the greatest resource benefit for grasslands generally receive higher ranking points.

### **Grassland Bird Requirements:**

If the land you've enrolled in an application is at least 20 contiguous acres of hay land, you'll need to manage your land for grassland birds if you're selected for a contract.

When managing your lands for grassland birds, you will be required to follow a delayed mowing schedule on hay land. First cut will need to be completed by June 1 of each year enrolled in the program. Second cut will not occur until 65 days after the first cut.

If the land you've enrolled in an application is pasture or pasture and hay that is not at least 20 contiguous



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acres, you will not be required to manage your land for grassland birds.

If the land you've enrolled in an application includes ONLY hay land, and that hay land does not meet the acreage requirements for grassland birds, your application will be considered ineligible for the program through the ranking process.

### Eligibility Process:

All agricultural producers must have an interest in the land being offered in the application, have control of this land for the life of the contract, be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions, and be in compliance with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements. Eligibility forms can be completed with FSA.



**For an application and more information about this program log onto:**

<http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/>

**If you need practices to address resource concerns on your pasture land or hay land that NRCS staff identified with you, sign up for the Vermont Environmental Quality Incentives Program's funding pool for practices such as pasture and hay planting, fence, watering facilities, or a grazing plan.**

### Contact an NRCS field office

**Addison County**

802 388-6748

**Caledonia & Essex Counties**

802 748-2641

**Chittenden County**

802 865-7895

**Orange & Washington Counties**

802 828-4493

**Franklin & Grand Isle Counties**

802 527-1296

**Lamoille County**

802 888-4935

**Orleans County**

802 334-6090

**Bennington & Rutland Counties**

802 775-8034

**Windham County**

802 254-9766

**Windsor County**

802 295-7942