

CRP Signup Now Includes Some Cropped Wetlands

ANNAPOLIS, MD — The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continues to provide excellent opportunities to landowners interested in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. The February 1989 signup allows for the first time the enrollment of some cropped wetlands. Harvest is typically restricted on these areas due to excessive wetness during the growing season. By enrolling these lands and converting them to natural vegetation, landowners can receive payments for helping reverse the trend of wetland loss in recent decades.

"On average, crop yields are lower on farmed wetlands than they are on better drained areas," said Pearl S. Reed, state conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service in Maryland. "This is a good opportunity for farmers to take these areas out of production and improve wildlife habitat on their farms."

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in addition to making annual rent-

al payments to program participants, pays half the cost of establishing cover and restoring wetland values in enrolled fields.

Ron Lambertson, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region is also a strong supporter of this program, which he sees not only for its value to farmers, but for its high potential to enhance wetland resources. "With recent wetland losses in Maryland averaging 1,000 acres per year, protection and restoration of farmed wetlands through CRP offers an excellent opportunity to preserve and maintain wetland values. I hope farmers throughout Maryland can take advantage of this opportunity to help themselves as well as our precious wetland resources that are so vital to the health of the Chesapeake Bay."

Cropland subject to scour erosion is also now eligible for the CRP. Eligibility requires that the land be scoured with erosion caused by out-of-streambank water flows which can be

expected to flood at least once every 10 years.

Originally, highly erodible crop fields were enrolled to reduce soil loss on these fragile lands by establishing permanent cover. More recently strips of cropland adjacent to streams, wetlands, and other water bodies became eligible for enrollment, effectively reducing the amount of nutrients and pollutants entering surface waters.

Maryland will again offer an additional \$20 per acre for certain land enrolled in the federal CRP which also is in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area or meets federal requirements as a vegetated filter strip. "We are pleased that response to our program has been so good," said Wayne A. Cawley, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture. "Maryland farmers enrolled more than 1,300 acres in the Maryland CRP this summer. The acreage totals do not fully represent the value of this land which is located in sensitive resource areas as buffer strips along waterways

and in the 1,000 foot Chesapeake Bay Critical Area," noted Cawley. "It's an additional program that farmers can use to improve water quality."

"I believe the CRP has contributed significantly to the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay," said James C. Richardson, Director of the Maryland ASCS. "In the last signup alone, we ranked sixth in the nation in filter strip signup and

this is equivalent to more than 100 miles of protected shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay."

The eighth CRP signup period will be Feb. 6-24. Almost 10,000 acres have been enrolled in the Maryland CRP from bids submitted during the first seven signups.

For more information, contact your local ASCS, SCS, or soil conservation district office.

Human Resources Scholarship Available

NEWARK, De. — New Castle County Extension Homemakers Council awards a \$500 scholarship to a high school graduate enrolling in the College of Human Resources at the University of Delaware. This year, those eligible have been expanded to include people enrolling in college directly from high school as well as people who have been out of high school for awhile. If you are interested in applying for the scholarship, please call the New Castle County Cooperative Extension office at 451-1239 for information to be sent to you. Deadline for

applying is February 1. This scholarship is open to all without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, age or national origin.



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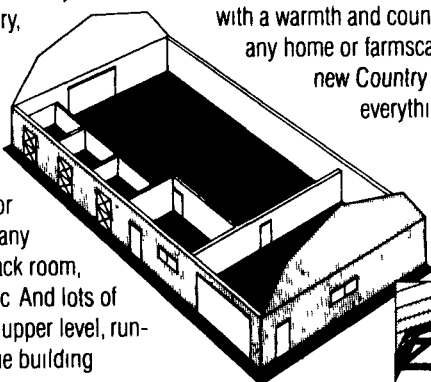
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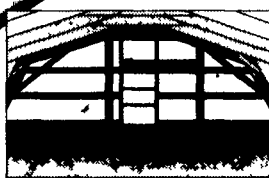
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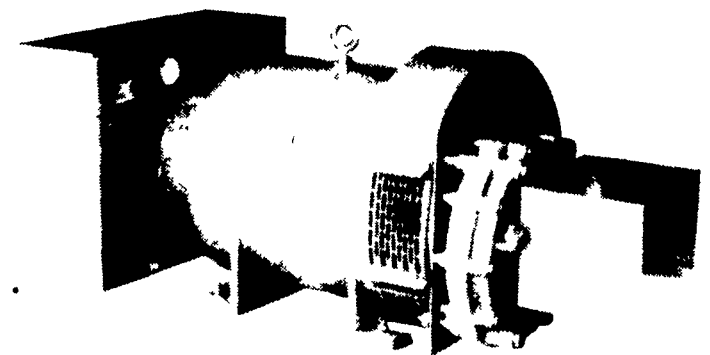
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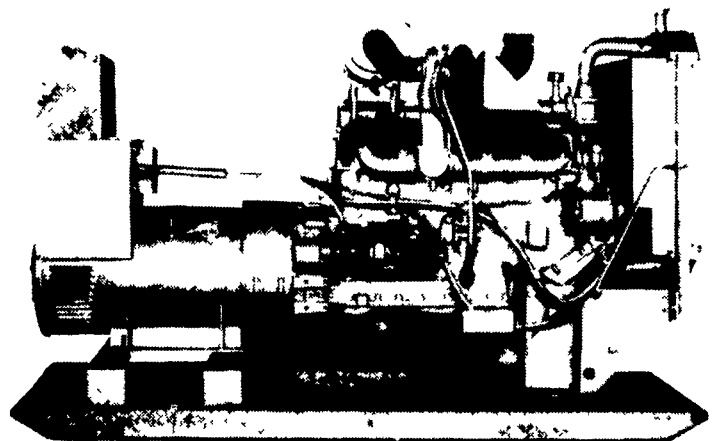
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