

Considerations CPR contracts expire for CRP take-out

There is little experience with converting grassland cover to crop production using conservation systems. Conservation compliance requires that all highly erodible land (HEL) have an applied conservation system when converted to crop production. Wind and water erosion problems could result if traditional intensive tillage methods are used. The following are consideration and management strategies that should be taken into account when converting CRP to crop production:

Consider the time of year. Normally in the Columbia Basin, water erosion occurs between December and March and wind erosion from February through May. Conservation practices need to be in place during this time. Some form of protection (grass residues/crop growth) should be considered prior to take-out.

Erosion is influenced by soil type, slope gradient and length. Sandy and very fine sandy loam soils have high potential for wind erosion. Silt loam soils in greater than 12" rainfall zones face water erosion potential. The steeper the slope, the higher the potential.

Vegetation characteristics play an important role. Bunchgrasses such as Crested and Siberian wheatgrass and Big bluegrass will be easier to remove than a sodforming grass like Pubescent wheatgrass. In high precipitation areas, grasses such as orchardgrass, smooth brome and intermediate wheatgrass may form a dense vegetation. In addition, many fields in high precipitation zones (more than 12") may have a dominance of young pine trees up to 10 feet high. Conversion to cropland would

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The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), enacted in 1985, enabled farmers to retire highly erodible or environmentally sensitive cropland for 10 years. These contracts began to expire in 1995.

CRP contract holders have a number of issues to consider when their CRP contract expires. Some of the options for end use are: return to cropland, utilize existing forage for grazing or wildlife purposes, retention of the most environmentally sensitive acres, or a combination of uses.

The majority of CRP contracts are for a ten year period. They begin and expire based on the federal government's fiscal year, October 1 through September 30. Contracted acres can be "worked" 90 days prior to the expiration date. See table below:

| Contract years | Expiration date | 90 days prior |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1986-1995 | October 1, 1995 | July 1, 1995 |
| 1987-1996 | October 1, 1996 | July 1, 1996 |
| 1988-1997 | October 1, 1997 | July 1, 1997 |

If the chosen end use alternative is going to involve technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formally SCS) for its compliance plan, grazing plan, etc., the local field office should be contacted a minimum of six months before the contract expires.


If the contract holder plans to return CRP acres to crop production for a commodity crop and plans to participate in government programs, they must have their conservation compliance plan approved by the local field office and the local conservation district prior to planting the first commodity crop. Check with your county FSA (formally ASCS) office to find out how to protect your acreage base when the contract expires.

ODFW-annual deer herd composition counts


Every year, after the hunting season, ODFW employees conduct their annual deer herd composition counts. Normally, the counts are started in early November and are completed during the first part of December. The information collected during these counts is used to determine the proportion of bucks that survived the hunting season and helps determine the ratio of fawns produced per 100 adult does. The survey is not a total count but provides a ratio that is used for setting the buck season the following year and assists in determining the over-winter survival of the fawns. The information collected in the fall is used with the population inventories that will be conducted next April to determine overall population levels.

The total number of deer classified for the Big Game Management Units within the Heppner Wildlife District during 1995 is listed in the following table:

| Unit | Total deer | Does | Fawns | Bucks | B/100 does | F/100 does |
|--------------|------------|------|-------|-------|------------|------------|
| Heppner | 673 | 418 | 209 | 46 | 11 | 50 |
| Fossil | 855 | 550 | 244 | 61 | 11 | 44 |
| E. Biggs | 342 | 205 | 110 | 27 | 13 | 54 |
| S. Col Basin | 749 | 409 | 263 | 77 | 19 | 64 |




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Conservation Farmer of the Year

Stan Kemp, Lexington, was named the 1995 Morrow County Conservation Farmer of the Year. His "lifetime of stewardship" started when he began farming in 1947. Through the years, he has adjusted his farming practices to improve management of his land. Wind erosion remains his biggest problem, but by increasing residue and by spreading straw on trouble spots, he has successfully controlled those areas. Kemp has also minimized runoff by reshaping and planting to grass some natural ditches which had cut into his fields. His clean fields and higher-than-average yields testify to his hard work and dedication to conservation.



Stan Kemp

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