CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

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TITLE II
FARM SECURITY AND RURAL INVESTMENT ACT (FARM BILL)

• 80% increase in funding levels from:
  $9.5 billion to $17.1 billion LOB

• Working lands emphasis vs retirement contracts

• Legislators looking for major impact

• Next Farm Bill - GREEN
RELEVANCE

• Value enhancement
• Environmental Benefits
• Program Awareness
• Public Support
• Green payments
INTENT

• *Maximize* environmental benefits for *minimum* investment

• Reduce possible regulatory actions due to degradation of resource concerns
INTENT

- Enhance producer/landowners compliance with local, state, and federal agricultural environmental laws
  - CAFO: Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
  - SMZ: Streamside Management Zones
  - TMDL: Total Maximum Daily Load
PRODUCER INTEREST

- Lack of understanding
- Too technical
- Too much work for too little money
- Don’t want government aware of business
- Unaware of programs and their applications

UGA-CES 2002 Survey of Agents
Dr. Bill Givan  Extension Economist
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- EQIP
- WHIP
- CRP
- CSP
- TSP
- CREP
- CRP-CS
- WINGS
- PFW
- BQI
- FLEP
- GRP
- WRP
- CTA

UGA CENTER FOR AGRIBUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Natural Resources Conservation Service: USDA - NRCS
Easement (Acreage) Programs

• Grassland Reserve Program – GRP

• Wetlands Reserve Program - WRP
Farm Service Agency: USDA-FSA Easement (Acreage) Programs

- Conservation Reserve Program – CRP
- Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-up – CRP-CS
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program - CREP
USDA-NRCS
Dollar Base Programs

• Environmental Quality Incentives Program – EQIP
• Conservation Security Program – CSP
• Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - WHIP
USDA-NRCS
Technical Assistance Programs

• Conservation Technical Assistance – CTA

• Technical Service Providers - TSP
Forest Service: USDA-FS
Landowner Program

- Forest Land Enhancement Program – FLEP

Administered through Georgia Forestry Commission w/ technical support from NRCS when necessary
Wildlife Programs

- **Bobwhite Quail Initiative – BQI**
  Georgia Department of Natural Resources
  Continuous Sign-up CRP

- **Partners for Fish and Wildlife – PFW**
  US Fish and Wildlife Service and
  GA Soil and Water Conservation Commission

- **Wildlife Incentives for Nongame and Game Species – WINGS**
  Georgia Power, NRCS, DNR, GFC, SWCC
GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM - GRP

- Voluntary restoration and protection of grassland from urban development and cropping
- No acreage maximum, but minimum of 40 contiguous acres
- 30 year and permanent easements
- 10, 15, 20, and 30 year rental agreements
- Enrollment options permit:
  - Common grazing practices
  - Haying and mowing
WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM
WRP

• 10 year restoration cost share agreements
• 30 year contracts to permanent easements
• Based on area land values
• Average project cost per acre = $1,100 for financial assistance
  – Rental and cost share of restoration
  – Average project size 177 acres
CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM - CRP

• CRP is a voluntary long-term cropland diversion program

• FSA primary application process with some NRCS tech support

• Rental Payments: annualized for life of contract. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soil and the average dryland cash rent.
CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM - CRP

• EBI Factors:
  1. Wildlife
  2. Water quality
  3. Erosion
  4. Enduring Benefits
  5. Air Quality
  6. Cost

• Cost share assistance: FSA will pay not more than 50% of the participant’s cost in establishing approved practice

• Maintenance incentive payments: CRP annual rental payments may include up to $5.00 per acre to perform certain maintenance obligations.
CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM CONTINUOUS SIGNUP

**CRP-CS**

- Authorized 2 million total acres
- Apply at any time, usually small acres
- Cropland or Marginal pasture land
- Cost share

- Rental payments
- CRP-SIP - Signing Incentive Payment
- CRP-PIP - Practice Incentive Payment
- Water protection
CONSERVATION RESERVE
PROGRAM CONTINUOUS SIGNUP
CRP-CS

• Northern Bobwhite Quail Initiative
  – 250,000 acres nationwide
  – CP 33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
  – Disincentive: loss of cropland base
CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

CREP

• Voluntary land retirement program
• Partnership among producers, state, and Federal government
• Administered similar to CRP
• Usually designed for watersheds
  – Chesapeake Bay
  – Everglades
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM - EQIP

• Provides incentive payments and cost-share benefits for implementing conservation practices
• Limited to $450,000 lifetime per farmer
• 50% cost share basis for structural practices
• Addresses Statewide Resource Concerns
• Contracts from 2 to 10 years
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM - EQIP

• Statewide Resource Concerns
  – Reduced soil erosion and improved soil quality
  – Improved water quality by managing wastes
  – Protection of water quantity by conservation
  – Increased wildlife habitat for all species

Environmental Benefit Index as calculated by ranking of practices to achieve maximum benefits for minimum investment
## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM - EQIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Quality</th>
<th>Water Quality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conservation Tillage</td>
<td>• Stackhouses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Nutrient Management</td>
<td>• Earthen Lagoons</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pest Management</td>
<td>• Livestock Fencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cover Crop</td>
<td>• Watering Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Grass Waterways</td>
<td>• Waste Utilization</td>
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<td>• Terraces</td>
<td>• Rotational Grazing</td>
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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM - EQIP

Water Conservation

- Irrigation Water Management Systems
- Retro-fitting of existing systems with water saving drops and low impact sprinklers
- Cover crops
- Conservation Tillage

Wildlife Habitat

- Ecosystem management – species interdependency
- Field buffer zones
- Integrated Pest Management programs
- Strategic food plot development
WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM - WHIP

• Voluntary creation of high quality wildlife habitats

• Enrollment priorities
  – Habitats for declining wildlife species

• Cost share payments under agreements of 5 to 10 years in duration

• Example: controlled burning < $10 per acre
CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

CSP

• EQIP vs CSP:
  • EQIP is incentive to create practice - new
  • CSP is designed to maintain or ‘secure’ conservation practices on part or all of the farm; ie. Annual rental rates for 5 to 10 years

• Identify and reward those producers meeting the very highest standards of conservation and environmental management

• Create ‘powerful’ incentives for others to attain similar levels of performance
CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM CSP

• For working lands
• For all farmers
• Comprehensive conservation plan
• Reward best and motivate rest
• Green payments

• Integrate conservation on productive lands – Envisioned to be a ‘portfolio’ approach to Conservation Systems
• Conservation Security Plan
CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM - CSP

- Stewardship payment
- Existing practice component
- New practice one-time payments
- Enhanced payment

- Watershed sign-up
- Low stewardship payments
- Tier approach
- Impact Assessment
- Averaging about $10,000 per farm on 5 year contracts
CSP Watersheds - FY-2005 Sign-up
(All 220 Watersheds Will Be Eligible)

- Orange: 202 New Watersheds for 2005
- Green: 18 Pioneer Watersheds from 2004, also eligible for 2005
CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - CTA

- NRCS Technical Assistance:
  - Design and evaluation of conservation practices
  - Development of cultural practices to establish and maintain vegetation
  - Planning and construction of conservation practices to protect and enhance natural resources

- Ponds
- Waste Systems
- Terraces
- Nutrient Management
TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS - TSP

- Certified by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in categories of conservation practices and for conservation planning
- Program participants (PP) select NRCS or TSP to perform technical services
- PP selects, hires, contracts with, and pays the TSP
- Payment made to PP or TSP if assigned
- Reimbursement up to not-to-exceed rate
- Payment provisions are in PP’s contract prior to PP employing TSP
FOREST LAND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM - FLEP

- Reforestation
- Stand Improvement
- Agroforestry
- Water quality improvements
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Special Practices
  - Longleaf pine
  - Hardwoods
- Eligibility: min 10 acres of private forest land - Cost share program
- Zero funding
BOBWHITE QUAIL INITIATIVE

BQI

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Selected Counties
- Field Borders and hedgerow management
- Minimum 50 contiguous acres
- New practices
- Contracts of three years renewed annually
- $60 per acre of habitat plus maintenance
- Maximum $15,000 per year per person
PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE - PFW

• Restoration and protection projects USF&W
• SWCC stream fencing program ($1-$4/lin ft)
• SWCC stream bank stabilizing program ($25-$45/lin ft)
• GFC longleaf pine restoration ($175-$350/acre)
• Enhancement of longleaf plantations with prescribed burning ($12/acre)
WILDLIFE INCENTIVES FOR NON-GAME AND GAME SPECIES

WINGS

- Right of Way management to enhance wildlife habitat
- 3 year programs
- Annual and permanent plantings ($100/acre)
- Fallow disking and chemical control ($60/acre)
- Max total payment $1,350 LOC
WEBSITES

• www.usda.gov
• www.dnr.state.ga.us
• www.gaswcc.org
• www.gfc.state.ga.us
• www.extension.caes.uga.edu
QUESTIONS?

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