

Farm Security And
Rural Investment Act
of 2002



Overview of Selected Provisions
Of Interest to Florida Farmers

Disclaimer:

This booklet was compiled using the latest available information from the Natural Resources and Conservation Service and the USDA Farm Service Agency. Many of the programs outlined in this booklet are not final and are subject to changes. All information in this booklet should be verified with the proper government agency for accuracy because changes may occur between printing and program completion.

The Farm Bureau believes that this information is important to our membership and felt we should provide you with current program outlines even though many are still in an incomplete state.



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For additional information, go to the Florida Farm Bureau Web site at: <http://floridafarmbureau.org/>



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Florida Farmers and Ranchers should be very excited about the passage of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (Farm Bill). This new legislation provides exciting new opportunities for Florida producers.

Florida Farm Bureau has been a strong supporter for the concept of rewarding farmers for the good stewardship practices they utilize to manage their lands. We are encouraged that this farm bill offers cost share opportunities for many of our normal agricultural practices. ***Florida producers are already utilizing sound conservation management practices. Why not match these good practices with Conservation Security Program dollars?***

This booklet was designed to offer you insight to the conservation title of the farm bill and is not intended to be a complete overview of the entire legislation. In fact, we made every effort to make it a brief, understandable summary of the conservation elements that are evolving as the farm bill is implemented.

If you are interested in these programs, it is our recommendation that you continue to check the USDA Farm Service Agency's Web site (<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill/>) and contact your local FSA office to obtain the latest information. (Contact information is included in this publication.) You may also call our Agricultural Policy Division at 352/374-1544.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl B. Loop Jr." in a cursive script.

Carl B. Loop Jr.
President



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
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



“The farm bill will strengthen the farm economy over the long term. It helps farmer independence, and preserves the farm way of life for generations. It helps America's farmers, and therefore it helps America.”

—President Bush, May 13



This publication provides overviews of selected Title II Conservation Programs and Title VIII Forestry Programs. The complete listing of the Farm Bill titles is:

- I. Commodity Programs
- II. Conservation
- III. Agricultural Trade and Aid
- IV. Nutrition Programs
- V. Farm Credit
- VI. Rural Development
- VII. Research
- VIII. Forestry
- IX. Energy
- Miscellaneous Provisions

In the coming months, the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide to producers instructions on calculating new bases and yields and information on payments and other issues. Producers should also visit the FSA Web site frequently to obtain more information.

Major provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill include:

- Higher loan rates for most crops.
- Direct payments for wheat, feed grains, cotton, and rice (previously called production flexibility contract payments).
- Expanded eligibility for direct payments to producers of oilseeds and peanuts.
- Additional payments (called counter-cyclical payments) to farmers when commodity prices fall below their target prices.
- An option for producers to update the bases and yields used to calculate counter-cyclical payments.
- New programs for dairy, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas), peanuts, honey, wool, and mohair.
- Reauthorizing the Conservation Reserve Program and expanding the acreage cap from 36.4 million acres to 39.2 million acres.
- Authorizing the Grassland Reserve Program at 2 million acres for restored, improved, or natural grassland, rangeland, and pastureland, including prairie.
- Authorizing a Conservation Corridor Demonstration Program on the Delmarva Peninsula in parts of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.
- Authorizing the Conservation Security Program to assist producers in maintaining or adopting practices on private agricultural land and to incidental forested land.
- Reauthorizing the Wetlands Reserve Program and increasing the acreage cap to 2.275 million acres.
- Reauthorizing the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and increasing the funding from about \$200 million to \$400 million this year, ranging to \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 2007.
- Reauthorizing the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and increasing the funding to \$85 million by fiscal year 2007.



Title II. Conservation

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals.

Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

EQIP was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers EQIP. Funding for EQIP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

How EQIP Works

EQIP activities are carried out according to an EQIP plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer. Contracts for confined livestock feeding operations require development and implementation of a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP).

This plan is approved by the local conservation district. Practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. Farmers and ranchers may elect to use an approved third-party provider for technical assistance.

EQIP applications are accepted throughout the year. NRCS evaluates each application using a state and locally developed evaluation process. Higher priorities are given to applications that encourage the use of cost-effective conservation practices, address national conservation priorities, and optimize environmental benefits.

State Technical Committees, Tribal representatives, and local working groups convened by the conservation district advise NRCS on implementation of the program to address identified resource needs to concerns.

EQIP may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices important to improving and maintaining the health of natural resources in the area. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a producer to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat management, or to develop a CNMP and components of a CNMP.

Limited resource farmers and beginning farmers may be eligible for up to 90 percent of the cost of conservation practices.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term of one year after implementation of the last scheduled practice and a maximum term of

ten years. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost share payments for implementing conservation practices.

Total cost-share and incentive payments are limited to \$450,000 per individual over the period of the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the number of farms or contracts. Starting in fiscal year 2003, no individual or entity may receive EQIP payments in any crop year in which the individual or entity's average adjusted gross income for the preceding three years exceeds \$2.5 million, unless 75 percent of that income is from farming, ranching, or forestry interest.

Eligibility

Producers engaged in livestock or crop production on eligible land may apply for the program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, private non-industrial forestland and other farm or ranch lands as determined by the Secretary.



Questions and Answers

About EQIP

Q. How can Florida producers enroll in FSA's new and revised farm programs?

Answer: FSA will publicize sign-up deadlines and program information as soon as they are available. Please continue to check the FSA Web site and local media sources, such as county office newsletters, newspapers, radio, and television for further information. Growers should also contact their county FSA office.

Q. What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)?

Answer: The EQIP, reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill, is a voluntary USDA conservation program for farmers and ranchers to treat identified soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on eligible land. It provides technical and financial assistance to eligible producers.

Q. What are the primary changes to EQIP in the 2002 Farm Bill?

Answer: The primary changes are:

- Producers can receive payments in the same year the contract is approved.
- Applications will be evaluated for funding based on a state and locally developed procedure to optimize environmental benefits.
- The "bid-down" provision (competitive cost-share reduction among program participants) has been eliminated.
- The minimum length of an EQIP contract has been reduced to one (1) year after the implementation of all practices.
- The maximum length remains the same at ten (10) years.
- Although the maximum cost-share rate remains at 75 percent, limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for up to 90 percent cost-share.
- Livestock operations are eligible to receive cost-share payments for waste storage facilities. Contracts for confined livestock feeding operations must include the development and implementation of a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP).
- Conservation Priority Areas are no longer required.

- Total cost-share and incentive payments have been increased to \$450,000 per individual or entity over the life of the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the number of farms or contracts.
- Starting in fiscal year 2003, no individual or entity may receive EQIP payments in any crop year in which the individual or entity's average adjusted gross income for the preceding three years exceeds \$2.5 million, unless 75 percent of the income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry interests.
- At least 60 percent of the funds for EQIP shall be targeted to livestock production practices, including grazing.
- Incentive payments are available for developing a CNMP and its component elements.

Q. What level of cost-sharing is available?

Answer: Through EQIP, producers may receive cost-share payments for up to 75 percent of the cost of structural conservation practices. They also may receive incentive payments for land management conservation practices important to improving and maintaining the health of natural resources in the area of for developing CNMPs. Limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for up to 90 percent cost-sharing. Actual cost-share rates and incentive payments will be determined at the State and local level.

Q. What conservation practices are eligible for financial assistance?

Answer: The State Conservationist, with advice of the State Technical Committee, identifies which conservation practices are eligible. Local work groups assist in identifying practices to treat the locally identified resource concerns. All practices must be implemented in conformance to NRCS standards and specifications.

Q. What kind of plan does a producer need for EQIP?

Answer: All EQIP activities must be carried out according to an EQIP plan of operations, which includes only the practice(s) to be implemented. These plans are site-specific for each farm or ranch and may be developed by producers or with help from NRCS or other certified providers. EQIP plans of operation are developed in conjunction with the producer and address the producer's objectives and the identified natural resources concerns. All plans subject to

NRCS technical standards are adapted for local conditions and are approved by the conservation district.

Q. What are cost-share limitations to producers?

Answer: Total cost-share and incentive payments have been increased to \$450,000 per individual or entity over the life of the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the number of farms or contracts. Starting in fiscal year 2003, no individual or entity may receive EQIP payments in any crop year in which the individual or entity's average adjusted gross income for the preceding three years exceeds \$2.5 million, unless 75 percent of that income is from farming, ranching, or forestry interests.

Q. How do producers apply for the program?

Answer: Producers may obtain EQIP applications at any USDA Service Center or through USDA's e-gov Internet site at: <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Applications will be accepted throughout the year. Applications for EQIP funding will be evaluated periodically.

Conservation Security Program

The 2002 Farm Bill establishes a new program entitled *The Conservation Security Program (CSP)*. This program is the first time that a farm bill has contained provisions for “green” payments. CSP provides incentive payments for implementing conservation practices for implementing conservation practices on working land.

The language for CSP is in Title II, Subtitle A of the 2002 Farm Bill (pp 94-104). The program runs from FY03 to FY07 and is funded at \$2 billion. CSP is designated as an entitlement program, meaning the funds must be available for any producer who wishes to participate.

The purpose of CSP is to “assist producers of agricultural operations in promoting ... conservation and improvement of the quality of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life and other conservation purposes as determined by the Secretary.”

To achieve these purposes the CSP uses a three-tiered approach. The producer will voluntarily choose the tier for participation. The producers must have an approved conservation security plan

to be eligible.

CSP is available for all crop, grassland, prairie, improved pasture and rangeland except land in the CRP, WRP, the Grassland Reserve Program and land used for cropland that had not been planted for at least four of the past six years.

There are some special provisions whereby a producer could simultaneously participate in the CRP or WRP and the CSP, but only with approval of the Secretary and a reduction in the CSP payment. In addition, only forested land that is incidental to the agricultural operation is eligible.

The CSP covers costs for adoption of new management, vegetation, and land based structural practices. In addition, CSP will also cover costs for maintenance of existing land management and vegetative practices. The CSP does not allow payment for maintenance of existing structures if the structures are already covered by a maintenance requirement.

The payments for the CSP are composed of two parts. First, there is a base payment. The base

payment is based on the average national per acre rental rate for a specified use during 2001 or an appropriately adjusted rate to ensure regional equity.

The second portion of the CSP payment is the average county cost of adopting or maintaining the practice for the 2001 crop year. Average county costs are determined by the Secretary.

Tier I is the base level of participation in CSP. At this level the farmer signs a five-year plan that addresses at least one resource of concern for the enrolled portion of the agricultural operation. The farmer is paid 5 percent of the base payment plus 75 percent for the cost of the practice chosen. A beginning farmer receives 90 percent of the practice cost.

Tier II is a second level of participation. The farmer signs a 5 to 10 year contract that addresses at least one resource of concern for the entire agricultural operation. The farmer is paid 10 percent of the base payment plus 75 percent (90 percent for beginning farmers) of the average cost for the practices chosen.

Tier III is the highest level of participation. In this tier the farmer signs a 5 to 10 year plan that ap-

plies a resource management system addressing all resources of concern for the entire agricultural operation. The farmer is paid 15 percent of the base payment plus 75 percent (90 percent for beginning farmers) of the average practice costs.

The maximum annual payment for Tier I is \$20,000. For Tier II the maximum annual payment is \$35,000 and for Tier III the maximum annual payment is \$45,000.

Farmers are eligible for enhanced payments if they do extra activities. These activities include using multiple conservation practices, participating in research, demonstrations or pilot projects, and carrying out an assessment of their plan.

It is important to remember that CSP covers new practices as well as maintenance of existing practices. There are a number of eligible practices including nutrient management, integrated pest management, residue management, air quality, energy, rotations, and others.

The CSP contracts can be modified at any time with approval by the Secretary and producer. In addition, they may be terminated by the producers without having to

refund payments received, if the farmer is in compliance with the terms of the contract at the time of termination. Finally, if there is a change in the land tenure interest, the contract is terminated unless the new operator agrees to the contract continuation and there is written notification given within 60 days.

The CSP represents a significant change in the approach to the government farm programs. It could represent a boost to the farmer's income. The national average cropland rent in 2001 was \$71 per acre. Assuming this is the price used, a farmer in Tier I would receive \$3.55 per acre for the base pay-

ment. If the practice cost were \$10 per acre, for example, the farmer would receive an additional \$7.50 per acre. The total payment, then, would be \$11.05 per acre. This amount could be increased if the farmer participated in any of the activities for enhanced payment.

At this writing the final rules have not been written. The NRCS handbook will be used to identify the eligible practices. The State Conservationist, in consultation with others, will determine the resources of concern for an area. The law states that the rules must be written within 270 days of enactment of the bill.

Table 1: Summary of Conservation Security Program Participation Levels

Tier	Base Pay Rate*	Length	Maximum Annual Payment	Minimal Requirements**
I	5%	5 years	\$20,000	Address one resource of concern on enrolled portion
II	10%	5—10 years	\$35,000	Address one resource of concern for entire farm
III	15%	5—10 years	\$45,000	System for all resources of concern for entire farm

*Base payment is 2001 national average rental rate for a specified use or an appropriately adjusted rate to ensure regional equity.
 **Resource of concern determined at the state level.



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property.

WHIP is reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill. Through WHIP, NRCS works with private landowners and operators; conservation districts; and Federal, State, and Tribal agencies to develop wildlife habitat on their property. Funding for WHIP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Benefits

Since WHIP began in 1998, nearly 11,000 participants have enrolled more than 1.6 million acres into the program. Most efforts have concentrated on improving upland wildlife habitat, such as native prairie, but there is an increasing emphasis on improving riparian and aquatic ar-

reas. The 2002 Farm Bill greatly expands the available tools for improving wildlife habitat conditions across the Nation.

Species that have benefited from WHIP activities include the grasshopper sparrow, bobwhite quail, swift fox, short-eared owl, Karner-blue butterfly, gopher tortoise, Louisiana black bear, Eastern collared lizard, Bachman's sparrow, ovenbird, and acorn woodpecker.

How WHIP Works

Conservation districts convene local work groups to identify local wildlife habitat priorities. The local work groups then provide input to the State Technical Committee that advises the State Conservationist in the development of a State WHIP plan. The State WHIP plan serves as a guide for the development of the State WHIP ranking criteria.

Persons interested in entering into a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop wildlife habitat may file an application at any time. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land for a

period of time, but retain private ownership.

NRCS works with the participant to develop a wildlife habitat development plan. This plan becomes the basis of the cost-share agreement between NRCS and the participant. NRCS provides cost-share payments to landowners under these agreements that are usually 50 to 10 years in duration, depending upon the practices to be installed.

There are shorter-term agreements to install practices that are needed to meet wildlife emergencies, as approved by the NRCS State conservationist. NRCS also provides greater cost-share assistance to landowners who enter into agreements of 15 years or more for practices on essential plant and animal habitat. NRCS can use up to 15 percent of its available WHIP funds for this purpose.

Eligibility

Eligible lands under the program are:

- Privately owned land
- Federal land when the primary benefit is on private or Tribal land
- State and local government land on a limited basis
- Tribal land

If land is determined eligible, NRCS places emphasis on enrolling:

- Habitat areas for wildlife species experiencing declining or significantly reduced populations
- Practices beneficial to fish and wildlife that may not otherwise be funded
- Wildlife and fishery habitats identified by local and state partners and Indian Tribes in each state.



Wetlands Reserve Program

Overview

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. WRP is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program. Funding for WRP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Benefits

WRP participants benefit by:

- Receiving financial and technical assistance in return for restoring and protecting wetland functions and values;
- Seeing a reduction in problems associated with farming potentially difficult areas, and

- Having incentives to develop wildlife recreational opportunities on their land.

Wetlands benefit the nation by providing fish and wildlife habitat, improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reducing flooding, recharging groundwater, protecting biological diversity, as well as providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.

How WRP Works

Landowners and Tribes may file an application for a conservation easement or a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land, but retain private ownership.

The program offers three enrollment options:

1. *Permanent Easement.* This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments for this option equal the lowest of three amounts: the agricultural value of the land, an established payment cap, or an amount offered by the landowner. In addition to paying for the easement, USDA pays 100 percent of the costs of restoring

the wetland.

2. *30-Year Easement.* Easement payments through this option are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. USDA also pays 75 percent of restoration costs.

For both permanent and 30-year easements, USDA pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

3. *Restoration Cost-Share Agreement.* This is an agreement (generally for a minimum of 10 years) to re-establish degraded or lost wetland habitat. USDA pays 75 percent of the cost of the restoration activity. This enrollment option does not place an easement on the property.

Other agencies, conservation districts, and private conservation organizations may provide additional assistance for easement payments and wetland restoration costs as a way to reduce the landowner's share of the costs. Such special partnership efforts are encouraged.

NRCS and its partners, including conservation districts, continue to

provide assistance to landowners after completion of restoration activities.

This assistance may be in the form of reviewing restoration measures, clarifying technical and administrative aspects of the easement and project management needs, and providing basic biological and engineering advice on how to achieve optimum results for wetland dependent species.

Applications are accepted through a continuous sign-up process. Applications may be obtained and filed at any time with your local USDA Service Center or conservation district office.

Applications also may be obtained through USDA's e-gov Internet site at: www.sc.egov.usda.gov. Enter "National Resources Conservation Service" in the Agency field, "Wetlands Reserve Program" in the Program Name field, and "CCC-1250" in the Form Number field.

Eligibility

To offer a conservation easement, the landowner must have owned the land for at least 12 months prior to enrolling it in the program, unless the land was inherited, the landowner exercised

the landowner's right of redemption after foreclosure, or the landowner can prove the land was not obtained for the purpose of enrolling it in the program. To participate in a restoration cost-share agreement, the landowner must show evidence of ownership.

To be eligible for WRP, land must be restorable and be suitable for wildlife benefits. This includes:

- Wetlands farmed under natural conditions
- Farmed wetlands
- Prior converted cropland
- Farmed wetland pasture
- Farmland that has become a wetland as a result of flooding
- Range land, pasture, or production forest land where the hydrology has been significantly degraded and can be restored
- Riparian areas which link protected wetlands
- Lands adjacent to protected wetlands that contribute significantly to wetland functions and values
- Previously restored wetlands that need long-term protection.

Ineligible Land. Ineligible land includes wetlands converted after

December 23, 1985; lands with timber stands established under a Conservation Reserve Program contract; Federal lands; and lands where conditions make restoration impossible.

Uses of WRP Land

On acreage subject to a WRP easement, participants control access to the land and may lease the land for hunting, fishing, and other undeveloped recreational activities.

At any time, a participant may request that additional activities be evaluated to determine if they are compatible uses for the site. This request may include such items as permission to cut hay, graze livestock, or harvest wood products. Compatible uses are allowed if they are fully consistent with the protection and enhancement of the wetland.

For More Information

If you need more information about WRP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002>

TITLE VIII. Forestry

A. Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)

1. *Program Purpose*

The federal objectives of this program are to invest in practices to establish, restore, protect, manage, maintain, and enhance the health and productivity of the non-industrial private forest lands (NIPF) in the United States for timber, and other multiple benefits.

The program targets afforestation, reforestation, improvement of poorly stocked stands, and timber stand improvement where needed to enhance and sustain the long-term productivity of timber and nontimber forest resources to help meet future public demand for all forest resources and provide environmental benefits.

2. *Administering Agency*

USDA Forest Service, in partnership with State Foresters and State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees, and in consultation with other Federal, State, and local natural resource management agencies.

3. *Funding Level and Program Lifespan*

\$100 million (in mandatory funding) from FY 2002-FY 2007 na-

tionally. Annual funding levels will be determined by the agencies involved in implementation.

4. *Amount of Assistance Offered*

Cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent is offered for the implementation of activities and practices approved in a State Priority Plan that designates priorities for action. Priority plans will be developed jointly by the State Forester and the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee.

5. *Forest Landowner Eligibility*

To be eligible for cost-share assistance, an owner of NIPF must develop and implement a management plan (addressing certain criteria) that provides for the treatment of no more than 1,000 acres of non-industrial private forestlands.

This acreage limit may be increased to no more than 5,000 acres if it is determined that the treatment of additional acres will result in significant public benefit. The management plan must be for no less than 10 years and must be approved by the State Forester.



6. *Federal Interim Rule Opportunities for Input on Program Development*

The target date for publication of the interim rule in the Federal Register is October 30, 2002, which will be followed by a 60-day comment period. Federally, December 1, 2002 is the target date for starting the program.

B. Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978

1. *Forest Land Enhancement Program*

The Secretary is directed to establish a Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) for the purpose of providing financial, technical, educational and related assistance to State Foresters to assist private landowners in actively managing their land.

To be eligible for cost-share assistance on up to 1,000 acres (which can be increased by the Secretary to not more than 5,000 acres), a landowner must agree to develop and implement for not less than 10 years a management plan that has been approved by the State Forester.

The Secretary shall make cost-share payments to the landowner up to 75 percent of the total cost of implementing the plan. The Secretary shall distribute funds to states after giving consideration to specified factors. The Secretary shall use \$100,000,000 of

Commodity Credit Corporation funds to carry out the program through September 30, 2007.

2. *Enhanced Community Fire Protection*

Recognizing the significant Federal interest in enhancing community protection from wildfire, the Secretary is authorized to cooperate with State Foresters in the management of lands to:

- (1) focus the Federal role in promoting optimal firefighting efficiency at the Federal, State and local levels;
- (2) expand outreach and education programs to homeowners and communities about fire protection; and
- (3) establish space around homes and property that is defensible against wildfire. The Secretary, in consultation with State Foresters and with the consent of private landowners, may undertake specified



activities on non-Federal lands to further these purposes.

B. Amendments to Other Laws

- 1. Renewable Resources (RREA)*
- 2. International Forestry*

The Office of International Forestry within the Forest Service is reauthorized through September 30, 2007.



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FAST Security Tips for Florida Growers

Some agricultural crop production materials may be targeted by criminals and should be carefully safeguarded.

Tips to strengthen farm security include:

- Follow all pesticide label directions.
- Secure pesticide/fertilizer transportation, mixing, loading, and application equipment, and adopt procedures governing how equipment is accessed or used for pesticide/fertilizer application.
- Post “No Trespassing” and “Authorized Access Only” signs, along with signs stating that unauthorized vehicles/trespassers are subject to search.
- Install appropriate perimeter protection around fields and facilities, such as fences and trenches, which prevent access into the site at points other than official entrances.
- Deliver hazardous materials to a secure site and store these materials in a secure, limited access “out of sight” location.
- Pay close attention to access control at potential hazardous material loading and unloading areas.
- Initiate stringent inventory management practices to limit the amount of potentially hazardous materials stored on site.
- Keep inventory records of on-site hazardous materials.▪
- Frequently inspect hazardous material storage areas and maintain an inspection log.
- Have MSDSs available for all stored hazardous materials.
- **Considerations when hiring employees:**
- Develop effective hiring and labor relation policies to obtain and retain good employees who will support and follow safety guidelines.
- Ensure that background checks have been performed on current/new employees as deemed appropriate, particularly if the person



handles potentially hazardous materials.

- Consider fingerprinting and photographing employees who handle hazardous materials.
- Be aware of personal identity theft such as stolen social security numbers, references, etc.
- Request that employees watch for any suspicious activities, challenge persons who they do not recognize, and adopt a company security whistleblower protection policy.
- Be aware of who has keys and access to hazardous material storage areas.
- Limit radio conversations about sensitive topics.
- When a worker's employment ends, retrieve that person's keys and employment identification cards, and change computer access passwords as appropriate.
- If employment termination is involuntary, assess the worker's violence potential and take additional, appropriate security precautions.
- Develop effective emergency response procedures to help ensure management and employees understand
 - how to respond and whom to contact in the case of an emergency.
 - Report any suspicious activities, vehicles, persons, threats made toward personnel or facilities, sabotage/vandalism to facilities or equipment, and any thefts, inventory shortages or missing products that could pose a risk to public health or safety.
 - Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers readily available, including fire, law enforcement, and medical contacts.



Immediately report any suspicious activities to:

- 1-800-800-3855** Be Aware/Be Secure for AN fertilizers.
 - 1-800-342-5869** Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Law Enforcement Division for all incidents.
 - 1-800-342-0820** Florida Department Law Enforcement Security Hotline
- Inform your supervisor and your state association.

EMERGENCIES: Call 911

Guidelines presented by the Florida Agricultural Security Taskforce, a cooperative effort of Florida Citrus Mutual, Florida Farm Bureau Federation, Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association, and the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association with assistance from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.





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