



News Release

Record Number of Farmers and Ranchers Certified Under 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance

Overwhelming Number of Farmers and Ranchers Certify to Follow Conservation Compliance Guidelines, Building on Long-Standing Participation through Other USDA Programs

WASHINGTON, July 10, 2015 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that over 98.2 percent of producers have met the 2014 Farm Bill requirement to certify conservation compliance to qualify for crop insurance premium support payments.

Implementing the 2014 Farm Bill provisions for conservation compliance is expected to extend conservation provisions for an additional 1.5 million acres of highly erodible lands and 1.1 million acres of wetlands, which will reduce soil erosion, enhance water quality, and create wildlife habitat.

"This overwhelming response is a product of USDA's extensive outreach and the commitment of America's farmers to be stewards of the land," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "By investing in both American farmers and the health of our productive lands, we are ensuring future generations have access to fertile soil, healthy food supplies, and a strong rural economy."

USDA has gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure that every impacted producer knew of the June 1, 2015 deadline to certify their conservation compliance. For example, all 2015 crop insurance contracts included conservation compliance notifications. USDA has sent out more than 50,000 reminder letters and postcards to individual producers, made over 25,000 phone calls, conducted informational meetings and training sessions for nearly 6,000 stakeholders across the country, including in major specialty crop producing states with affected commodity groups, and more. Since December 2014, USDA collaborated with crop insurers to ensure they had updated lists for agents to continue contacting producers to also remind them of the filing deadline.

Of the small number of producers who have not certified their conservation compliance, USDA records suggest the majority are no longer farming or may have filed forms with discrepancies that can still be reconciled. The Farm Service Agency is proactively reaching back out to all of these producers before their sales closing date and working with individuals facing extenuating circumstances who have not filed the form in order to assist them with certifying compliance.

"I've asked the agencies to contact the producers again before their sales closing date," said Vilsack. "I want to ensure that every producer that turned in an AD-1026 by June 1, 2015, knows they can still make corrections and remain eligible for premium support."

USDA is providing additional flexibility to help the newly insured producers to certify their conservation compliance. For example, producers, who began farming or ranching after June 1, or producers who have not participated in USDA programs prior to June 1, can file an exemption to the conservation compliance certification for reinsurance year 2016 and still be eligible for the crop insurance premium support.

The Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification form ([AD-1026](#)) is available at local USDA Service Centers and online.

Today's announcement was made possible by the 2014 Farm Bill, which builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past six years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for the taxpayer. Since enactment, USDA has implemented many provisions of this critical legislation, providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit [USDA.gov](#).

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