

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3823, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1223, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1508; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1423, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576; Pub. L. 102-237, title II, §204(4), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1855, related to consultation with Secretary of the Interior, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §§323, 326, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 992, effective 90 days after Apr. 4, 1996.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 90 days after Apr. 4, 1996, see section 326 of Pub. L. 104-127, set out as an Effective Date of 1996 Amendment note under section 3821 of this title.

§ 3824. Fairness of compliance

If the actions of an unrelated person or public entity, outside the control of, and without the prior approval of, the landowner or tenant result in a change in the characteristics of cropland that would cause the land to be determined to be a wetland, the affected land shall not be considered to be wetland for purposes of this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1224, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1424, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576.)

SUBCHAPTER IV—AGRICULTURAL
RESOURCES CONSERVATION PROGRAMPART I—COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

SUBPART A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 3830. Comprehensive conservation enhance-
ment program

(a) Establishment

(1) In general

During the 1996 through 2002 calendar years, the Secretary shall establish a comprehensive conservation enhancement program (referred to in this section as “CCEP”) to be implemented through contracts and the acquisition of easements to assist owners and operators of farms and ranches to conserve and enhance soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, wetland, and wildlife habitat.

(2) Means

The Secretary shall carry out the CCEP by—

- (A) providing for the long-term protection of environmentally sensitive land; and
- (B) providing technical and financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to—
 - (i) improve the management and operation of the farms and ranches; and
 - (ii) reconcile productivity and profitability with protection and enhancement of the environment.

(3) Programs

The CCEP shall consist of—

- (A) the conservation reserve program established under subpart B;
- (B) the wetlands reserve program established under subpart C; and
- (C) the environmental quality incentives program established under part IV of this subchapter.

(b) Administration

(1) In general

In carrying out the CCEP, the Secretary shall enter into contracts with owners and operators and acquire interests in land through easements from owners, as provided in this part and part IV of this subchapter.

(2) Prior enrollments

Acreage enrolled in the conservation reserve or wetlands reserve program prior to April 4, 1996, shall be considered to be placed into the CCEP.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1230, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1431(2), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576; amended Pub. L. 103-66, title I, §1402(a), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 332; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §331, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 992; Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2006(b), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 237.)

AMENDMENTS

2002—Pub. L. 107-171, §2006(b)(1), substituted “Comprehensive conservation enhancement program” for “Environmental conservation acreage reserve program” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 107-171, §2006(b)(2), (4), substituted “a comprehensive conservation enhancement program” for “an environmental conservation acreage reserve program” and “CCEP” for “ECARP”.

Subsecs. (a)(2), (3), (b). Pub. L. 107-171, §2006(b)(4), substituted “CCEP” for “ECARP” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-171, §2006(b)(3), struck out heading and text of subsec. (c). Text read as follows:

“(1) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary may designate watersheds, multistate areas, or regions of special environmental sensitivity as conservation priority areas that are eligible for enhanced assistance under this part and part IV of this subchapter.

“(2) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may designate areas as conservation priority areas to assist, to the maximum extent practicable, agricultural producers within the conservation priority areas to comply with nonpoint source pollution requirements under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) and other Federal and State environmental laws and to meet other conservation needs.

“(3) PRODUCERS.—The Secretary may provide technical assistance, cost-share payments, and incentive payments to producers in a conservation priority area under this part and part IV of this subchapter based on—

“(A) the significance of the soil, water, wildlife habitat, and related natural resource problems in a watershed, multistate area, or region; and

“(B) the structural practices or land management practices that best address the problems, and that maximize environmental benefits for each dollar expended, as determined by the Secretary.”

1996—Pub. L. 104-127 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section consisted of subsecs. (a) to (c) requiring Secretary to establish and implement an Environmental Conservation Acreage Reserve Program during 1991 through 1995 calendar years.

1993—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 103-66 struck out before period at end “to place in the Environmental Conservation Acreage Reserve Program during the 1986 through 1995 calendar years a total of not less than 40,000,000 nor more than 45,000,000 acres”.

CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE

Pub. L. 106-224, title II, §211, June 20, 2000, 114 Stat. 406, as amended by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2503(b)(1)(B), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 269, provided that:

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall use \$40,000,000 of funds of the Commodity Credit Corpora-

tion to provide financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to—

“(1) address threats to soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, wetland, and wildlife habitat;

“(2) comply with Federal and State environmental laws; and

“(3) make beneficial, cost-effective changes to cropping systems, grazing management, manure, nutrient, pest, or irrigation management, land uses, or other measures needed to conserve and improve soil, water, and related natural resources.

“(b) TYPE OF ASSISTANCE.—Assistance under this section may be made in the form of cost share payments or incentive payments, as determined by the Secretary.

“(c) AREAS.—The Secretary shall provide assistance under this section to areas that are not designated under section 1230(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 ([former] 16 U.S.C. 3830(c)).”

FARMLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM

Pub. L. 104-127, title III, § 388, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1020, directed Secretary of Agriculture to establish and carry out a farmland protection program, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, § 2503(b)(1)(A), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 269.

[Pub. L. 107-171, title II, § 2503(b)(2), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 269, provided that: “The amendment made by paragraph (1)(A) [repealing section 388 of Pub. L. 104-127, formerly set out above] shall have no effect on any contract entered into under section 388 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 [Pub. L. 104-127] (16 U.S.C. 3830 note) that is in effect as of the date of enactment of this Act [May 13, 2002].”]

§ 3830a. Repealed. Pub. L. 107-171, title I, § 1613(j)(3), title II, § 2006(c), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 221, 237

Section, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1230A, as added Pub. L. 106-387, § 1(a) [title VII, § 755], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-42, related to good faith reliance.

SUBPART B—CONSERVATION RESERVE

CODIFICATION

Subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985, comprising this subpart, was originally designated in Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1509, by Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §§ 1431(1), 1432(1), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3576, 3577, and amended by Pub. L. 99-500, Oct. 18, 1986, 100 Stat. 1783, and Pub. L. 99-591, Oct. 30, 1986, 100 Stat. 3341; Pub. L. 99-641, Nov. 10, 1986, 100 Stat. 3556; Pub. L. 100-233, Jan. 6, 1988, 101 Stat. 1568; Pub. L. 100-387, Aug. 11, 1988, 102 Stat. 924; Pub. L. 101-512, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1915; Pub. L. 101-624, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3359; Pub. L. 102-237, Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1818; Pub. L. 102-324, July 22, 1992, 106 Stat. 447; Pub. L. 102-552, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4102; Pub. L. 103-66, Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 312; Pub. L. 104-127, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 888; Pub. L. 106-78, Oct. 22, 1999, 113 Stat. 1135; Pub. L. 106-387, Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549; Pub. L. 107-76, Nov. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 704. Subchapter B is shown herein, however, as having been added by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, § 2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 238, without reference to the intervening amendments because of the extensive revision of the subchapter's provisions by Pub. L. 107-171.

§ 3831. Conservation reserve

(a) In general

Through the 2012 fiscal year, the Secretary shall formulate and carry out a conservation reserve program under which land is enrolled through the use of contracts to assist owners and operators of land specified in subsection (b) of this section to conserve and improve the soil,

water, and wildlife resources of such land and to address issues raised by State, regional, and national conservation initiatives.

(b) Eligible land

The Secretary may include in the program established under this subpart—

(1) highly erodible cropland that—

(A)(i) if permitted to remain untreated could substantially reduce the agricultural production capability for future generations; or

(ii) cannot be farmed in accordance with a plan that complies with the requirements of subchapter II of this chapter; and

(B) the Secretary determines had a cropping history or was considered to be planted for 4 of the 6 years preceding the date of enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (except for land enrolled in the conservation reserve program as of that date);

(2) marginal pasture land converted to wetland or established as wildlife habitat prior to November 28, 1990;

(3) marginal pasture land to be devoted to appropriate vegetation, including trees, in or near riparian areas, or devoted to similar water quality purposes (including marginal pastureland converted to wetland or established as wildlife habitat);

(4) cropland that is otherwise ineligible if the Secretary determines that—

(A) if permitted to remain in agricultural production, the land would—

(i) contribute to the degradation of soil, water, or air quality; or

(ii) pose an on-site or off-site environmental threat to soil, water, or air quality;

(B) the land is a—

(i) newly-created, permanent grass sod waterway; or

(ii) a contour grass sod strip established and maintained as part of an approved conservation plan;

(C) the land will be devoted to newly established living snow fences, permanent wildlife habitat, windbreaks, shelterbelts, or filterstrips devoted to trees or shrubs;

(D) the land poses an off-farm environmental threat, or a threat of continued degradation of productivity due to soil salinity, if permitted to remain in production; or

(E) enrollment of the land would facilitate a net savings in groundwater or surface water resources of the agricultural operation of the producer; or

(5) the portion of land in a field not enrolled in the conservation reserve in a case in which more than 50 percent of the land in the field is enrolled as a buffer, if—

(A) the land is enrolled as part of the buffer; and

(B) the remainder of the field is—

(i) infeasible to farm; and

(ii) enrolled at regular rental rates.

(c) Planting status of certain land

For purposes of determining the eligibility of land to be placed in the conservation reserve es-

established under this subpart, land shall be considered to be planted to an agricultural commodity during a crop year if—

(1) during the crop year, the land was devoted to a conserving use; or

(2)(A) during the crop year or during any of the 2 years preceding the crop year, the land was enrolled in the water bank program; and

(B) the contract of the owner or operator of the cropland expired or will expire in calendar year 2000, 2001, or 2002.

(d) Maximum enrollment

The Secretary may maintain up to 39,200,000 acres in the conservation reserve at any 1 time during the 2002 through 2009 fiscal years (including contracts extended by the Secretary pursuant to section 1437(c) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 3831 note; Public Law 101-624)). During fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012, the Secretary may maintain up to 32,000,000 acres in the conservation reserve at any 1 time.

(e) Duration of contract

(1) In general

For the purpose of carrying out this subpart, the Secretary shall enter into contracts of not less than 10, nor more than 15, years.

(2) Certain land

(A) In general

In the case of land devoted to hardwood trees, shelterbelts, windbreaks, or wildlife corridors under a contract entered into under this subpart after October 1, 1990, and land devoted to such uses under contracts modified under section 3835a of this title, the owner or operator of the land may, within the limitations prescribed under this section, specify the duration of the contract.

(B) Hardwood trees

In the case of land that is devoted to hardwood trees under a contract entered into under this subpart prior to October 1, 1990, the Secretary may extend the contract for a term of not to exceed 5 years, as agreed to by the owner or operator of such land and the Secretary.

(3) 1-year extension

In the case of a contract described in paragraph (1) the term of which expires during calendar year 2002, an owner or operator of land enrolled under the contract may extend the contract for 1 additional year.

(f) Conservation priority areas

(1) Designation

On application by the appropriate State agency, the Secretary shall designate watershed areas of the Chesapeake Bay Region, the Great Lakes Region, the Long Island Sound Region, and other areas of special environmental sensitivity as conservation priority areas.

(2) Eligible watersheds

Watersheds eligible for designation under this subsection shall include areas with actual and significant adverse water quality or habi-

tat impacts related to agricultural production activities.

(3) Expiration

Conservation priority area designation under this subsection shall expire after 5 years, subject to redesignation, except that the Secretary may withdraw a watershed's designation—

(A) on application by the appropriate State agency; or

(B) in the case of an area covered by this subsection, if the Secretary finds that the area no longer contains actual and significant adverse water quality or habitat impacts related to agricultural production activities.

(4) Duty of Secretary

In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall attempt to maximize water quality and habitat benefits in the watersheds described in paragraph (1) by promoting a significant level of enrollment of land within the watersheds in the program under this subpart by whatever means the Secretary determines are appropriate and consistent with the purposes of this subpart.

(g) Multi-year grasses and legumes

(1) In general

For purposes of this subpart, alfalfa and other multi-year grasses and legumes in a rotation practice, approved by the Secretary, shall be considered agricultural commodities.

(2) Cropping history

Alfalfa, when grown as part of a rotation practice, as determined by the Secretary, is an agricultural commodity subject to the cropping history criteria under subsection (b)(1)(B) for the purpose of determining whether highly erodible cropland has been planted or considered planted for 4 of the 6 years referred to in such subsection.

(h) Eligibility for consideration

On the expiration of a contract entered into under this subpart, the land subject to the contract shall be eligible to be considered for re-enrollment in the conservation reserve.

(i) Balance of natural resource purposes

In determining the acceptability of contract offers under this subpart, the Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, an equitable balance among the conservation purposes of soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1231, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 238; amended Pub. L. 109-148, div. B, title I, §107(a), Dec. 30, 2005, 119 Stat. 2750; Pub. L. 109-234, title III, §3022, June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 478; Pub. L. 110-28, title IV, §4101, May 25, 2007, 121 Stat. 152; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §§2101-2105, 2106(a)(2), (b)(1), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1028, 1029, 1031, 1032; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §§2101-2105, 2106(a)(2), (b)(1), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1756, 1757, 1759, 1760.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, referred to in subsec. (b)(1)(B), is

the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-246, which was approved June 18, 2008.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3831, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1231, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1509; Pub. L. 99-500, §101(a) [title VI, §643], Oct. 18, 1986, 100 Stat. 1783, 1783-36, and Pub. L. 99-591, §101(a) [title VI, §643], Oct. 30, 1986, 100 Stat. 3341, 3341-36; Pub. L. 99-641, title II, §205, Nov. 10, 1986, 100 Stat. 3563; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §§1432(2), 1447(a), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3577, 3605; Pub. L. 102-324, §1(a), July 22, 1992, 106 Stat. 447; Pub. L. 103-66, title I, §1402(b), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 332; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §332(a)(1), (b), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 994; Pub. L. 106-387, §1(a) [title XI, §1102(a)], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-75; Pub. L. 107-76, title VII, §758(a), Nov. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 741, related to a conservation reserve program to be formulated and carried out by the Secretary through the 2002 calendar year, prior to the general amendment of this subpart by Pub. L. 107-171.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-246, §2101, substituted “2012 fiscal year” for “2007 calendar year” and inserted “and to address issues raised by State, regional, and national conservation initiatives” before period at end.

Subsec. (b)(1)(B). Pub. L. 110-246, §2102(1), substituted “the date of enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008” for “May 13, 2002” and substituted semicolon for period at end.

Subsec. (b)(4)(C) to (E). Pub. L. 110-246, §2102(2), in subpar. (C) struck out “or” at end, in subpar. (D) substituted “or” for “and” at end, and in subpar. (E) inserted “or” at end.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 110-246, §2103, substituted “2009 fiscal years” for “2007 calendar years” and “(16 U.S.C.)” for “(16 U.S.C.)” and inserted at end “During fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012, the Secretary may maintain up to 32,000,000 acres in the conservation reserve at any 1 time.”

Subsec. (f)(1). Pub. L. 110-246, §2104, substituted “the Chesapeake Bay Region” for “the Chesapeake Bay Region (Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia)”.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 110-246, §2105, amended subsec. (g) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “For purposes of this subpart, alfalfa and other multi-year grasses and legumes in a rotation practice, approved by the Secretary, shall be considered agricultural commodities.”

Subsecs. (h) to (j). Pub. L. 110-246, §2106(a)(2), redesignated subsecs. (i) and (j) as (h) and (i), respectively, and struck out former subsec. (h) which related to pilot program for enrollment of wetland and buffer acreage in conservation reserve during 2002 through 2007 calendar years.

Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 110-246, §2106(b)(1), renumbered subsec. (k) as section 3831a of this title.

2007—Subsec. (k)(2). Pub. L. 110-28 substituted “The” for “During calendar year 2006, the”.

2006—Subsec. (k)(3)(G). Pub. L. 109-234 substituted “\$504,100,000” for “\$404,100,000”.

2005—Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 109-148 added subsec. (k).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

REGULATIONS

Pub. L. 106-387, §1(a) [title XI, §1105], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-78, required the Secretary of Agri-

culture, as soon as practicable after Oct. 28, 2000, to promulgate regulations to implement the amendments by section 1(a) [title XI] of Pub. L. 106-387, amending former sections 3831 and 3832 of this title.

STUDY ON ECONOMIC EFFECTS

Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2101(b), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 252, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act [May 13, 2002], the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report that describes the economic and social effects on rural communities resulting from the conservation reserve program established under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.).

“(2) COMPONENTS.—The study under paragraph (1) shall include analyses of—

“(A) the impact that enrollments in the conservation reserve program have on rural businesses, civic organizations, and community services (such as schools, public safety, and infrastructure), particularly in communities with a large percentage of whole farm enrollments;

“(B) the effect that those enrollments have on rural population and beginning farmers (including a description of any connection between the rate of enrollment and the incidence of absentee ownership);

“(C)(i) the manner in which differential per acre payment rates potentially impact the types of land (by productivity) enrolled;

“(ii) changes to the per acre payment rates that may affect that impact; and

“(iii) the manner in which differential per acre payment rates could facilitate retention of productive agricultural land in agriculture; and

“(D) the effect of enrollment on opportunities for recreational activities (including hunting and fishing).”

STUDY OF IMPACT OF PILOT PROGRAM

Pub. L. 106-387, §1(a) [title XI, §1104], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-78, required the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study of the impact of the pilot program established under former section 3831(h) of this title, as added by section 1(a) [title XI, §1102(a)] of Pub. L. 106-387, and to report on the results of the study to committees of Congress not later than Mar. 1, 2003.

STUDY OF LAND USE FOR EXPIRING CONTRACTS AND EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY

Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1437, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3584, required the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study of cropland subject to expiring conservation reserve contracts entered into prior to Nov. 28, 1990, and to report on the study to committees of Congress not later than Dec. 31, 1993, and authorized the Secretary, during calendar years 1996 to 2000, to extend up to 10 years contracts entered into under this subpart prior to Nov. 28, 1990, or to purchase long-term or permanent easements as provided for in part III of this subchapter, at the option of the owner or operator on land that the Secretary has determined under the study should remain in conserving uses.

EXISTING CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Pub. L. 99-263, Mar. 24, 1986, 100 Stat. 59, provided: “That the conservation reserve program shall not replace or reduce any existing conservation program.”

§ 3831a. Emergency forestry conservation reserve program

(a) Definitions

In this section:

(1) Merchantable timber

The term “merchantable timber” means timber on private nonindustrial forest land on

which the average tree has a trunk diameter of at least 6 inches measured at a point no less than 4.5 feet above the ground.

(2) Private nonindustrial forest land

The term “private nonindustrial forest land” includes State school trust land.

(b) Program

The Secretary shall carry out an emergency pilot program in States that the Secretary determines have suffered damage to merchantable timber in counties affected by hurricanes during the 2005 calendar year.

(c) Eligible acreage

(1) In general

Subject to paragraph (2) and the availability of funds under paragraph (7), an owner or operator may enroll private nonindustrial forest land in the conservation reserve under this section.

(2) Determination of damages

Eligibility for enrollment shall be limited to owners and operators of private nonindustrial forest land that have experienced a loss of 35 percent or more of merchantable timber in a county affected by hurricanes during the 2005 calendar year.

(3) Exemptions

Acreage enrolled in the conservation reserve under this section shall not count toward—

- (A) county acreage limitations described in section 3843(b)¹ of this title; or
- (B) the maximum enrollment described in section 3831(d) of this title.

(4) Duties of owners and operators

As a condition of entering into a contract under this section, during the term of the contract, the owner or operator of private nonindustrial forest land shall agree—

- (A) to restore the land, through site preparation and planting of similar species as existing prior to hurricane damages or to the maximum extent practicable with other native species, as determined by the Secretary; and
- (B) to establish temporary vegetative cover the purpose of which is to prevent soil erosion on the eligible acreage, as determined by the Secretary.

(5) Duties of the Secretary

(A) In general

In return for a contract entered into by an owner or operator of private nonindustrial forest land under this section, the Secretary shall provide, at the option of the landowner—

- (i) notwithstanding the limitation in section 3834(f)(1) of this title, a lump sum payment; or
- (ii) annual rental payments.

(B) Calculation of lump sum payment

The lump sum payment described in subparagraph (A)(i) shall be calculated using a net present value formula, as determined by

the Secretary, based on the total amount a producer would receive over the duration of the contract.

(C) Calculation of annual rental payments

The annual rental payment described in subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be equal to the average rental rate for conservation reserve contracts in the county in which the land is located.

(D) Rolling signup

The Secretary shall offer a rolling signup for contracts under this section.

(E) Duration of contracts

A contract entered into under this section shall have a term of 10 years.

(6) Balance of natural resources

In determining the acceptability of contract offers under this section, the Secretary shall consider an equitable balance among the purposes of soil erosion prevention, water quality improvement, wildlife habitat restoration, and mitigation of economic loss.

(7) Funding

The Secretary shall use \$504,100,000, to remain available until expended, of funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to carry out this section.

(8) Determinations by Secretary

A determination made by the Secretary under this section shall be final and conclusive.

(9) Regulations

(A) In general

Not later than 90 days after December 30, 2005, the Secretary shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to implement this section.

(B) Procedure

The promulgation of regulations and administration of this section shall be made without regard to—

- (i) the notice and comment provisions of section 553 of title 5;
- (ii) the Statement of Policy of the Secretary of Agriculture effective July 24, 1971 (36 Fed. Reg. 13804), relating to notices of proposed rulemaking and public participation in rulemaking; and
- (iii) chapter 35 of title 44 (commonly known as the “Paperwork Reduction Act”).

(C) Congressional review of agency rulemaking

In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall use the authority provided under section 808 of title 5.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1231A, as added and amended Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2106(b), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1032, and Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2106(b), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1760.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 3843 of this title, referred to in subsec. (c)(3)(A), was amended generally by Pub. L. 110-246,

¹ See References in Text note below.

title II, § 2707(b), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1805, and, as so amended, no longer contains provisions relating to county acreage limitations.

CODIFICATION

December 30, 2005, referred to in subsec. (c)(9)(A), was in the original “the date of enactment of this Act”, which was translated as meaning the date of enactment of Pub. L. 109-148, which enacted subsec. (k) of section 3831 of this title (now this section), to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 both renumbered section 1231(k) of Pub. L. 99-198 as section 1231A of Pub. L. 99-198 and made identical amendments to such section. Pub. L. 110-234 was repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

Section 3831(k) of this title, which was transferred and redesignated as this section and amended by Pub. L. 110-246, § 2106(b), was based on Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1231(k), as added Pub. L. 109-148, div. B, title I, § 107(a), Dec. 30, 2005, 119 Stat. 2750; amended Pub. L. 109-234, title III, § 3022, June 15, 2006, 120 Stat. 478; Pub. L. 110-28, title IV, § 4101, May 25, 2007, 121 Stat. 152.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Pub. L. 110-246, § 2106(b), transferred section 3831(k) of this title to this section, substituted “this section” for “this subsection” wherever appearing, redesignated pars. (1) to (3) as subsecs. (a) to (c), respectively, in subsec. (a) redesignated subpars. (A) and (B) as pars. (1) and (2), respectively, in subsec. (c) redesignated subpars. (A) to (I) as pars. (1) to (9), respectively, in par. (1) substituted “paragraph (2)” for “subparagraph (B)” and “paragraph (7)” for “subparagraph (G)”, in pars. (3) and (4) redesignated cls. (i) and (ii) as subpars. (A) and (B), respectively, in par. (3)(B) substituted “section 3831(d) of this title” for “subsection (d) of this section”, in par. (5) redesignated cls. (i) to (v) as subpars. (A) to (E), respectively, in subpar. (A) redesignated subcls. (I) and (II) as cls. (i) and (ii), respectively, in subpar. (B) substituted “subparagraph (A)(i)” for “clause (i)(I)”, in subpar. (C) substituted “subparagraph (A)(ii)” for “clause (i)(II)”, in par. (9) redesignated cls. (i) to (iii) as subpars. (A) to (C), respectively, and in subpar. (B) redesignated subcls. (I) to (III) as cls. (i) to (iii), respectively. See Codification note above.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

§ 3831b. Pilot program for enrollment of wetland and buffer acreage in conservation reserve

(a) Program required

(1) In general

During the 2008 through 2012 fiscal years, the Secretary shall carry out a program in each State under which the Secretary shall enroll eligible acreage described in subsection (b).

(2) Participation among States

The Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that owners and operators in each State have an equitable opportunity to participate in the program established under this section.

(b) Eligible acreage

(1) Wetland and related land

Subject to subsections (c) and (d), an owner or operator may enroll in the conservation reserve, pursuant to the program established under this section, land—

(A) that is wetland (including a converted wetland described in section 3822(b)(1)(A) of this title) that had a cropping history during at least 3 of the immediately preceding 10 crop years;

(B) on which a constructed wetland is to be developed that will receive flow from a row crop agriculture drainage system and is designed to provide nitrogen removal in addition to other wetland functions;

(C) that was devoted to commercial pond-raised aquaculture in any year during the period of calendar years 2002 through 2007; or

(D) that, after January 1, 1990, and before December 31, 2002, was—

(i) cropped during at least 3 of 10 crop years; and

(ii) subject to the natural overflow of a prairie wetland.

(2) Buffer acreage

Subject to subsections (c) and (d), an owner or operator may enroll in the conservation reserve, pursuant to the program established under this section, buffer acreage that—

(A) with respect to land described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of paragraph (1)—

(i) is contiguous to such land¹

(ii) is used to protect such land; and

(iii) is of such width as the Secretary determines is necessary to protect such land, taking into consideration and accommodating the farming practices (including the straightening of boundaries to accommodate machinery) used with respect to the cropland that surrounds such land; and

(B) with respect to land described in subparagraph (D) of paragraph (1), enhances a wildlife benefit to the extent practicable in terms of upland to wetland ratios, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) Program limitations

(1) Acreage limitation

The Secretary may enroll in the conservation reserve, pursuant to the program established under this section, not more than—

(A) 100,000 acres in any State; and

(B) a total of 1,000,000 acres.

(2) Relationship to maximum enrollment

Subject to paragraph (3), any acreage enrolled in the conservation reserve under this section shall be considered acres maintained in the conservation reserve.

(3) Relationship to other enrolled acreage

Acreage enrolled in the conservation reserve under this section shall not affect for any fiscal year the quantity of—

(A) acreage enrolled to establish conservation buffers as part of the program announced on March 24, 1998 (63 Fed. Reg. 14109); or

(B) acreage enrolled into the conservation reserve enhancement program announced on May 27, 1998 (63 Fed. Reg. 28965).

(4) Review; potential increase in enrollment acreage

The Secretary shall conduct a review of the program established under this section with

¹ So in original. Probably should be followed by a semicolon.

respect to each State that has enrolled land in the conservation reserve pursuant to the program. As a result of the review, the Secretary may increase the number of acres that may be enrolled in a State under the program to not more than 200,000 acres, notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A).

(d) Owner or operator enrollment limitations

(1) Wetland and related land

(A) Wetlands and constructed wetlands

The maximum size of any land described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of subsection (b)(1) that an owner or operator may enroll in the conservation reserve, pursuant to the program established under this section, shall be 40 contiguous acres.

(B) Flooded farmland

The maximum size of any land described in subparagraph (D) of subsection (b)(1) that an owner or operator may enroll in the conservation reserve, pursuant to the program established under this section, shall be 20 contiguous acres.

(C) Coverage

All acres described in subparagraph (A) or (B), including acres that are ineligible for payment, shall be covered by the conservation contract.

(2) Buffer acreage

The maximum size of any buffer acreage described in subsection (b)(2) that an owner or operator may enroll in the conservation reserve under this section shall be determined by the Secretary in consultation with the State Technical Committee.

(3) Tracts

Except for land described in subsection (b)(1)(C) and buffer acreage related to such land, the maximum size of any eligible acreage described in subsection (b)(1) in a tract of an owner or operator enrolled in the conservation reserve under this section shall be 40 acres.

(e) Duties of owners and operators

During the term of a contract entered into under the program established under this section, an owner or operator shall agree—

(1) to restore the hydrology of the wetland within the eligible acreage to the maximum extent practicable, as determined by the Secretary;

(2) to establish vegetative cover (which may include emerging vegetation in water and bottomland hardwoods, cypress, and other appropriate tree species) on the eligible acreage, as determined by the Secretary;

(3) to a general prohibition of commercial use of the enrolled land; and

(4) to carry out other duties described in section 3832 of this title.

(f) Duties of the Secretary

(1) In general

Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), in return for a contract entered into under this section, the Secretary shall—

(A) make payments to the owner or operator based on rental rates for cropland; and

(B) provide assistance to the owner or operator in accordance with sections 3833 and 3834 of this title.

(2) Contract offers and payments

The Secretary shall use the method of determination described in section 3834(c)(2)(B) of this title to determine the acceptability of contract offers and the amount of rental payments under this section.

(3) Incentives

The amounts payable to owners and operators in the form of rental payments under contracts entered into under this section shall reflect incentives that are provided to owners and operators to enroll filterstrips in the conservation reserve under section 3834 of this title.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1231B, as added Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2106(a)(1), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1029, and Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2106(a)(1), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1757.)

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 enacted identical sections. Pub. L. 110-234 was repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those comprising this section were contained in section 3831(h) of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 110-246.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Enactment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as a note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

§ 3832. Duties of owners and operators

(a) In general

Under the terms of a contract entered into under this subpart, during the term of the contract, an owner or operator of a farm or ranch shall agree—

(1) to implement a plan approved by the local conservation district (or in an area not located within a conservation district, a plan approved by the Secretary) for converting eligible land normally devoted to the production of an agricultural commodity on the farm or ranch to a less intensive use (as defined by the Secretary), such as pasture, permanent grass, legumes, forbs, shrubs, or trees, substantially in accordance with a schedule outlined in the plan;

(2) to place highly erodible cropland subject to the contract in the conservation reserve established under this subpart;

(3) not to use the land for agricultural purposes, except as permitted by the Secretary;

(4) to establish approved vegetative cover (which may include emerging vegetation in water), water cover for the enhancement of wildlife, or, where practicable, maintain existing cover on the land, except that—

(A) the water cover shall not include ponds for the purpose of watering livestock, irrigating crops, or raising fish for commercial purposes; and

(B) the Secretary shall not terminate the contract for failure to establish approved vegetative or water cover on the land if—

(i) the failure to plant the cover was due to excessive rainfall or flooding;

(ii) the land subject to the contract that could practicably be planted to the cover is planted to the cover; and

(iii) the land on which the owner or operator was unable to plant the cover is planted to the cover after the wet conditions that prevented the planting subsides;

(5) to undertake management on the land as needed throughout the term of the contract to implement the conservation plan;

(6) on a violation of a term or condition of the contract at any time the owner or operator has control of the land—

(A) to forfeit all rights to receive rental payments and cost sharing payments under the contract and to refund to the Secretary any rental payments and cost sharing payments received by the owner or operator under the contract, together with interest on the payments as determined by the Secretary, if the Secretary, after considering the recommendations of the soil conservation district and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, determines that the violation is of such nature as to warrant termination of the contract; or

(B) to refund to the Secretary, or accept adjustments to, the rental payments and cost sharing payments provided to the owner or operator, as the Secretary considers appropriate, if the Secretary determines that the violation does not warrant termination of the contract;

(7) on the transfer of the right and interest of the owner or operator in land subject to the contract—

(A) to forfeit all rights to rental payments and cost sharing payments under the contract; and

(B) to refund to the United States all rental payments and cost sharing payments received by the owner or operator, or accept such payment adjustments or make such refunds as the Secretary considers appropriate and consistent with the objectives of this subpart;

unless the transferee of the land agrees with the Secretary to assume all obligations of the contract, except that no refund of rental payments and cost sharing payments shall be required if the land is purchased by or for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or the transferee and the Secretary agree to modifications to the contract, in a case in which the modifications are consistent with the objectives of the program, as determined by the Secretary;

(8) not to conduct any harvesting or grazing, nor otherwise make commercial use of the forage, on land that is subject to the contract, nor adopt any similar practice specified in the contract by the Secretary as a practice that would tend to defeat the purposes of the contract, except that the Secretary may permit, consistent with the conservation of soil, water

quality, and wildlife habitat (including habitat during nesting seasons for birds in the area)—

(A) managed harvesting (including the managed harvesting of biomass), except that in permitting managed harvesting, the Secretary, in coordination with the State technical committee—

(i) shall develop appropriate vegetation management requirements; and

(ii) shall identify periods during which managed harvesting may be conducted;

(B) harvesting and grazing or other commercial use of the forage on the land that is subject to the contract in response to a drought or other emergency;

(C) routine grazing or prescribed grazing for the control of invasive species, except that in permitting such routine grazing or prescribed grazing, the Secretary, in coordination with the State technical committee—

(i) shall develop appropriate vegetation management requirements and stocking rates for the land that are suitable for continued routine grazing; and

(ii) shall establish the frequency during which routine grazing may be conducted, taking into consideration regional differences such as—

(I) climate, soil type, and natural resources;

(II) the number of years that should be required between routine grazing activities; and

(III) how often during a year in which routine grazing is permitted that routine grazing should be allowed to occur; and

(D) the installation of wind turbines, except that in permitting the installation of wind turbines, the Secretary shall determine the number and location of wind turbines that may be installed, taking into account—

(i) the location, size, and other physical characteristics of the land;

(ii) the extent to which the land contains wildlife and wildlife habitat; and

(iii) the purposes of the conservation reserve program under this subpart;

(9) not to conduct any planting of trees on land that is subject to the contract unless the contract specifies that the harvesting and commercial sale of trees such as Christmas trees are prohibited, nor otherwise make commercial use of trees on land that is subject to the contract unless it is expressly permitted in the contract, nor adopt any similar practice specified in the contract by the Secretary as a practice that would tend to defeat the purposes of the contract, except that no contract shall prohibit activities consistent with customary forestry practice, such as pruning, thinning, or stand improvement of trees, on land converted to forestry use;

(10) not to adopt any practice specified by the Secretary in the contract as a practice that would tend to defeat the purposes of this subpart; and

(11) to comply with such additional provisions as the Secretary determines are desirable and are included in the contract to carry

out this subpart or to facilitate the practical administration of this subpart.

(b) Conservation plans

The plan referred to in subsection (a)(1) of this section—

(1) shall set forth—

(A) the conservation measures and practices to be carried out by the owner or operator during the term of the contract; and

(B) the commercial use, if any, to be permitted on the land during the term; and

(2) may provide for the permanent retirement of any existing cropland base and allotment history for the land.

(c) Foreclosure

(1) In general

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an owner or operator who is a party to a contract entered into under this subpart may not be required to make repayments to the Secretary of amounts received under the contract if the land that is subject to the contract has been foreclosed on and the Secretary determines that forgiving the repayments is appropriate in order to provide fair and equitable treatment.

(2) Resumption of control

(A) In general

This subsection shall not void the responsibilities of an owner or operator under the contract if the owner or operator resumes control over the land that is subject to the contract within the period specified in the contract.

(B) Contract

On the resumption of the control over the land by the owner or operator, the provisions of the contract in effect on the date of the foreclosure shall apply.

(d) Rental payment reduction for certain authorized uses of enrolled land

In the case of an authorized activity under subsection (a)(8) on land that is subject to a contract under this subpart, the Secretary shall reduce the rental payment otherwise payable under the contract by an amount commensurate with the economic value of the authorized activity.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1232, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 242; amended Pub. L. 108-7, div. N, title II, §212, Feb. 20, 2003, 117 Stat. 545; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §§2107, 2108, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1032, 1033; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §§2107, 2108, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1760, 1761.)

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3832, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1232, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1509; Pub. L. 101-512, title I, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1919; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §§1433, 1447(a), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3579, 3605; Pub. L. 102-237,

title II, §204(5), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1855; Pub. L. 102-552, title V, §516(a), Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4136; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §332(a)(2), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 994; Pub. L. 106-78, title VII, §§763, 769, Oct. 22, 1999, 113 Stat. 1173, 1174; Pub. L. 106-387, §1(a) [title VIII, §817, title XI, §1103], Oct. 28, 2000, 114 Stat. 1549, 1549A-58, 1549A-77; Pub. L. 107-76, title VII, §§758(b), 759(b)(2), Nov. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 741, related to duties of owners and operators, prior to the general amendment of this subpart by Pub. L. 107-171.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a)(5) to (7). Pub. L. 110-246, §2107, added par. (5) and redesignated former pars. (5) and (6) as (6) and (7), respectively. Former par. (7) redesignated (8).

Subsec. (a)(8). Pub. L. 110-246, §2108(a), added par. (8) and struck out former par. (8) which related to prohibition against harvesting, grazing, or other commercial use of the forage, with exception authorizing Secretary to permit managed harvesting and grazing if appropriate requirements were developed and timeframes identified or in a drought or other emergency, and exception for the installation of wind turbines.

Pub. L. 110-246, §2107(1), redesignated par. (7) as (8). Former par. (8) redesignated (9).

Subsec. (a)(9) to (11). Pub. L. 110-246, §2107(1), redesignated pars. (8) to (10) as (9) to (11), respectively.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 110-246, §2108(b), added subsec. (d).

2003—Subsec. (a)(7)(A)(iii). Pub. L. 108-7 inserted before semicolon “, except that this clause shall not apply to the 2002 calendar year, and the Secretary shall repay the owner or operator (in a manner determined by the Secretary) for any reduction in rental payments made to the owner or operator as the result of the application of this clause to the 2002 calendar year”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

§ 3833. Duties of the Secretary

In return for a contract entered into by an owner or operator under section 3832 of this title, the Secretary shall—

(1) share the cost of carrying out the conservation measures and practices set forth in the contract for which the Secretary determines that cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest; and

(2) for a period of years not in excess of the term of the contract, pay an annual rental payment in an amount necessary to compensate for—

(A) the conversion of highly erodible cropland normally devoted to the production of an agricultural commodity on a farm or ranch to a less intensive use; and

(B) the retirement of any cropland base and allotment history that the owner or operator agrees to retire permanently.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1233, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 245.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3833, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1233, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1511, related to duties of Secretary, prior to the general amendment of this subpart by Pub. L. 107-171.

§ 3834. Payments**(a) Timing**

The Secretary shall provide payment for obligations incurred by the Secretary under a contract entered into under this subpart—

(1) with respect to any cost-sharing payment obligation incurred by the Secretary, as soon as practicable after the obligation is incurred; and

(2) with respect to any annual rental payment obligation incurred by the Secretary—

(A) as soon as practicable after October 1 of each calendar year; or

(B) at the option of the Secretary, at any time prior to such date during the year that the obligation is incurred.

(b) Federal percentage of cost sharing payments**(1) In general**

In making cost sharing payments to an owner or operator under a contract entered into under this subpart, the Secretary shall pay 50 percent of the cost of establishing water quality and conservation measures and practices required under each contract for which the Secretary determines that cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest.

(2) Limitation

The Secretary shall not make any payment to an owner or operator under this subpart to the extent that the total amount of cost sharing payments provided to the owner or operator from all sources would exceed 100 percent of the total cost of establishing measures and practices described in paragraph (1).

(3) Trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts, and wildlife corridors**(A) Applicability**

This paragraph applies to—

(i) land devoted to the production of hardwood trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts, or wildlife corridors under a contract entered into under this subpart after November 28, 1990;

(ii) land converted to such production under section 3835a of this title; and

(iii) land on which an owner or operator agrees to conduct thinning authorized by section 3832(a)(9) of this title, if the thinning is necessary to improve the condition of resources on the land.

(B) Payments**(i) Percentage**

In making cost share payments to an owner or operator of land described in subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall pay 50 percent of the reasonable and necessary costs incurred by the owner or operator for maintaining trees or shrubs, including the cost of replanting (if the trees or shrubs were lost due to conditions beyond the control of the owner or operator) or thinning.

(ii) Duration

The Secretary shall make payments as described in clause (i) for a period of not less than 2 years, but not more than 4 years, beginning on the date of—

(I) the planting of the trees or shrubs; or

(II) the thinning of existing stands to improve the condition of resources on the land.

(4) Hardwood tree planting

The Secretary may permit owners or operators that contract to devote at least 10 acres of land to the production of hardwood trees under this subpart to extend the planting of the trees over a 3-year period if at least ⅓ of the trees are planted in each of the first 2 years.

(5) Other Federal cost share assistance

An owner or operator shall not be eligible to receive or retain cost share assistance under this subsection if the owner or operator receives any other Federal cost share assistance with respect to the land under any other provision of law.

(c) Annual rental payments**(1) In general**

In determining the amount of annual rental payments to be paid to owners and operators for converting highly erodible cropland normally devoted to the production of an agricultural commodity to less intensive use, the Secretary may consider, among other things, the amount necessary to encourage owners or operators of highly erodible cropland to participate in the program established by this subpart.

(2) Method of determination

The amounts payable to owners or operators in the form of rental payments under contracts entered into under this subpart may be determined through—

(A) the submission of bids for such contracts by owners and operators in such manner as the Secretary may prescribe; or

(B) such other means as the Secretary determines are appropriate.

(3) Acceptance of contract offers**(A) Evaluation of offers**

In determining the acceptability of contract offers, the Secretary may take into consideration the extent to which enrollment of the land that is the subject of the contract offer would improve soil resources, water quality, or wildlife habitat or provide other environmental benefits.

(B) Establishment of different criteria in various States and regions

The Secretary may establish different criteria for determining the acceptability of contract offers in various States and regions of the United States based on the extent to which water quality or wildlife habitat may be improved or erosion may be abated.

(C) Local preference

In determining the acceptability of contract offers for new enrollments, the Secretary shall accept, to the maximum extent practicable, an offer from an owner or operator that is a resident of the county in which the land is located or of a contiguous county

if, as determined by the Secretary, the land would provide at least equivalent conservation benefits to land under competing offers.

(4) Hardwood tree acreage

In the case of acreage enrolled in the conservation reserve established under this subpart that is to be devoted to hardwood trees, the Secretary may consider bids for contracts under this subsection on a continuous basis.

(5) Rental rates

(A) Annual estimates

The Secretary (acting through the National Agricultural Statistics Service) shall conduct an annual survey of per acre estimates of county average market dryland and irrigated cash rental rates for cropland and pastureland in all counties or equivalent subdivisions within each State that have 20,000 acres or more of cropland and pastureland.

(B) Public availability of estimates

The estimates derived from the annual survey conducted under subparagraph (A) shall be maintained on a website of the Department of Agriculture for use by the general public.

(d) Cash or in-kind payments

(1) In general

Except as otherwise provided in this section, payments under this subpart—

(A) shall be made in cash or in commodities in such amount and on such time schedule as is agreed on and specified in the contract; and

(B) may be made in advance of determination of performance.

(2) Method of providing in-kind payments

If the payment to an owner or operator is made with in-kind commodities, the payment shall be made by the Commodity Credit Corporation—

(A) by delivery of the commodity involved to the owner or operator at a warehouse or other similar facility located in the county in which the highly erodible cropland is located or at such other location as is agreed to by the Secretary and the owner or operator;

(B) by the transfer of negotiable warehouse receipts; or

(C) by such other method, including the sale of the commodity in commercial markets, as is determined by the Secretary to be appropriate to enable the owner or operator to receive efficient and expeditious possession of the commodity.

(3) Cash payments

(A) Commodity Credit Corporation stocks

If stocks of a commodity acquired by the Commodity Credit Corporation are not readily available to make full payment in kind to the owner or operator, the Secretary may substitute full or partial payment in cash for payment in kind.

(B) Special conservation reserve enhancement program

Payments to an owner or operator under a special conservation reserve enhancement

program described in subsection (f)(4) of this section shall be in the form of cash only.

(e) Payments on death, disability, or succession

If an owner or operator that is entitled to a payment under a contract entered into under this subpart dies, becomes incompetent, is otherwise unable to receive the payment, or is succeeded by another person that renders or completes the required performance, the Secretary shall make the payment, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary and without regard to any other provision of law, in such manner as the Secretary determines is fair and reasonable in light of all of the circumstances.

(f) Payment limitation for rental payments

(1) In general

The total amount of rental payments, including rental payments made in the form of in-kind commodities, received by a person or legal entity, directly or indirectly, under this subpart for any fiscal year may not exceed \$50,000.

(2) Repealed. Pub. L. 110-234, title II, § 2110(c)(2), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1035, and Pub. L. 110-246, § 4(a), title II, § 2110(c)(2), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1763

(3) Other payments

Rental payments received by an owner or operator shall be in addition to, and not affect, the total amount of payments that the owner or operator is otherwise eligible to receive under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

(4) Special conservation reserve enhancement program

(A) In general

The provisions of this subsection that limit payments to any person or legal entity, and section 1305(d) of the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 1308 note; Public Law 100-203), shall not be applicable to payments received by a State, political subdivision, or agency thereof in connection with agreements entered into under a special conservation reserve enhancement program carried out by that entity that has been approved by the Secretary.

(B) Agreements

The Secretary may enter into such agreements for payments to States (including political subdivisions and agencies of States) that the Secretary determines will advance the purposes of this subpart.

(g) Other State or local assistance

In addition to any payment under this subpart, an owner or operator may receive cost share assistance, rental payments, or tax benefits from a State or subdivision thereof for enrolling land in the conservation reserve program.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1234, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title II, § 2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 245; amended Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §§ 2109,

2110(a), (b)(1), (c), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1034, 1035; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §§2109, 2110(a), (b)(1), (c), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1762, 1763.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, referred to in subsec. (f)(3), is Pub. L. 107-171, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 134. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 7901 of Title 7, Agriculture, and Tables.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3834, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1234, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1511; Pub. L. 100-387, title III, §322, Aug. 11, 1988, 102 Stat. 950; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §§1434, 1447(a), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3581, 3605, related to payments for obligations, prior to the general amendment of this subpart by Pub. L. 107-171.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 110-246, §2109, added par. (3) and struck out former par. (3) which related to the making of payments to an owner or operator of land devoted to the production of hardwood trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts, or wildlife corridors.

Subsec. (c)(3). Pub. L. 110-246, §2110(a), added par. (3) and struck out former par. (3). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “In determining the acceptability of contract offers, the Secretary may—

“(A) take into consideration the extent to which enrollment of the land that is the subject of the contract offer would improve soil resources, water quality, wildlife habitat, or provide other environmental benefits; and

“(B) establish different criteria in various States and regions of the United States based on the extent to which water quality or wildlife habitat may be improved or erosion may be abated.”

Subsec. (c)(5). Pub. L. 110-246, §2110(b)(1), added par. (5).

Subsec. (f)(1). Pub. L. 110-246, §2110(c)(1), substituted “received by a person or legal entity, directly or indirectly,” for “made to a person”.

Subsec. (f)(2). Pub. L. 110-246, §2110(c)(2), struck out par. (2) which related to promulgation of regulations defining the term “person” as used in subsec. (f) and providing terms and conditions determined necessary to ensure a fair and reasonable application of the subsec. (f) limitation.

Subsec. (f)(4)(A). Pub. L. 110-246, §2110(c)(3), substituted “any person or legal entity” for “any person”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

FIRST SURVEY PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (c)(5)

Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2110(b)(2), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1035, and Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2110(b)(2), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1763, provided that: “The first survey required by paragraph (5) of section 1234(c) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3834(c)), as added by subsection (a), shall be conducted not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act [June 18, 2008].”

[Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 enacted identical provisions. Pub. L. 110-234 was repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as a note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.]

CONSERVATION RESEARCH APPLICATION

For provisions directing that enumerated provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 shall apply to the conservation reserve program under this subchapter with respect to rental payments to persons under contracts entered into after Dec. 22, 1987, with certain exceptions, see section 1305(d) of Pub. L. 100-203, set out as a note under section 1308 of Title 7, Agriculture.

§ 3835. Contracts

(a) Ownership or operation requirements

(1) In general

Except as provided in paragraph (2), no contract shall be entered into under this subpart concerning land with respect to which the ownership has changed in the 1-year period preceding the first year of the contract period unless—

(A) the new ownership was acquired by will or succession as a result of the death of the previous owner;

(B) the new ownership was acquired before January 1, 1985;

(C) the Secretary determines that the land was acquired under circumstances that give adequate assurance that the land was not acquired for the purpose of placing the land in the program established by this subpart; or

(D) the ownership change occurred due to foreclosure on the land and the owner of the land immediately before the foreclosure exercises a right of redemption from the mortgage holder in accordance with State law.

(2) Exceptions

Paragraph (1) shall not—

(A) prohibit the continuation of an agreement by a new owner after an agreement has been entered into under this subpart; or

(B) require a person to own the land as a condition of eligibility for entering into the contract if the person—

(i) has operated the land to be covered by a contract under this section for at least 1 year preceding the date of the contract or since January 1, 1985, whichever is later; and

(ii) controls the land for the contract period.

(b) Sales or transfers

If, during the term of a contract entered into under this subpart, an owner or operator of land subject to the contract sells or otherwise transfers the ownership or right of occupancy of the land, the new owner or operator of the land may—

(1) continue the contract under the same terms or conditions;

(2) enter into a new contract in accordance with this subpart; or

(3) elect not to participate in the program established by this subpart.

(c) Modifications

(1) In general

The Secretary may modify a contract entered into with an owner or operator under this subpart if—

(A) the owner or operator agrees to the modification; and

(B) the Secretary determines that the modification is desirable—

- (i) to carry out this subpart;
- (ii) to facilitate the practical administration of this subpart;
- (iii) to facilitate a transition of land subject to the contract from a retired or retiring owner or operator to a beginning farmer or rancher or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher for the purpose of returning some or all of the land into production using sustainable grazing or crop production methods; or
- (iv) to achieve such other goals as the Secretary determines are appropriate, consistent with this subpart.

(2) Production of agricultural commodities

The Secretary may modify or waive a term or condition of a contract entered into under this subpart in order to permit all or part of the land subject to such contract to be devoted to the production of an agricultural commodity during a crop year, subject to such conditions as the Secretary determines are appropriate.

(d) Termination

(1) In general

The Secretary may terminate a contract entered into with an owner or operator under this subpart if—

- (A) the owner or operator agrees to the termination; and
- (B) the Secretary determines that the termination would be in the public interest.

(2) Notice to congressional committees

At least 90 days before taking any action to terminate under paragraph (1) all conservation reserve contracts entered into under this subpart, the Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate written notice of the action.

(e) Early termination by owner or operator

(1) Early termination

(A) In general

The Secretary shall allow a participant that entered into a contract under this subpart before January 1, 1995, to terminate the contract at any time if the contract has been in effect for at least 5 years.

(B) Liability for contract violation

The termination shall not relieve the participant of liability for a contract violation occurring before the date of the termination.

(C) Notice to Secretary

The participant shall provide the Secretary with reasonable notice of the desire of the participant to terminate the contract.

(2) Certain land excepted

The following land shall not be subject to an early termination of contract under this subsection:

- (A) Filterstrips, waterways, strips adjacent to riparian areas, windbreaks, and shelterbelts.

(B) Land with an erodibility index of more than 15.

(C) Other land of high environmental value (including wetland), as determined by the Secretary.

(3) Effective date

The contract termination shall become effective 60 days after the date on which the owner or operator submits the notice required under paragraph (1)(C).

(4) Prorated rental payment

If a contract entered into under this subpart is terminated under this subsection before the end of the fiscal year for which a rental payment is due, the Secretary shall provide a prorated rental payment covering the portion of the fiscal year during which the contract was in effect.

(5) Renewed enrollment

The termination of a contract entered into under this subpart shall not affect the ability of the owner or operator that requested the termination to submit a subsequent bid to enroll the land that was subject to the contract into the conservation reserve.

(6) Conservation requirements

If land that was subject to a contract is returned to production of an agricultural commodity, the conservation requirements under subchapters II and III of this chapter shall apply to the use of the land to the extent that the requirements are similar to those requirements imposed on other similar land in the area, except that the requirements may not be more onerous than the requirements imposed on other land.

(f) Transition option for certain farmers or ranchers

(1) Duties of the Secretary

In the case of a contract modification approved in order to facilitate the transfer, as described in subsection (c)(1)(B)(iii), of land to a beginning farmer or rancher or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher (in this subsection referred to as a “covered farmer or rancher”), the Secretary shall—

(A) beginning on the date that is 1 year before the date of termination of the contract—

(i) allow the covered farmer or rancher, in conjunction with the retired or retiring owner or operator, to make conservation and land improvements; and

(ii) allow the covered farmer or rancher to begin the certification process under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.);

(B) beginning on the date of termination of the contract, require the retired or retiring owner or operator to sell or lease (under a long-term lease or a lease with an option to purchase) to the covered farmer or rancher the land subject to the contract for production purposes;

(C) require the covered farmer or rancher to develop and implement a conservation plan;

(D) provide to the covered farmer or rancher an opportunity to enroll in the conservation stewardship program or the environmental quality incentives program by not later than the date on which the farmer or rancher takes possession of the land through ownership or lease; and

(E) continue to make annual payments to the retired or retiring owner or operator for not more than an additional 2 years after the date of termination of the contract, if the retired or retiring owner or operator is not a family member (as defined in section 1308-1(b)(3)(B)¹ of title 7) of the covered farmer or rancher.

(2) Reenrollment

The Secretary shall provide a covered farmer or rancher with the option to reenroll any applicable partial field conservation practice that—

(A) is eligible for enrollment under the continuous signup requirement of section 3831(h)(4)(B)¹ of this title; and

(B) is part of an approved conservation plan.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1235, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title II, § 2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 249; amended Pub. L. 110-234, title II, § 2111, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1035; Pub. L. 110-246, § 4(a), title II, § 2111, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1763.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, referred to in subsec. (f)(1)(A)(ii), is title XXI of Pub. L. 101-624, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3935, which is classified generally to chapter 94 (§ 6501 et seq.) of Title 7, Agriculture. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 6501 of Title 7 and Tables.

Section 1308-1 of title 7, referred to in subsec. (f)(1)(E), was amended by Pub. L. 110-246, title I, § 1603(d), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1736, and, as so amended, no longer contains a subsec. (b)(3)(B) or provisions defining “family member”.

Section 3831 of this title, referred to in subsec. (f)(2)(A), was amended by Pub. L. 110-246, title II, § 2106(a)(2), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1759, and, as so amended, no longer contains a subsec. (h)(4)(B) or provisions relating to a continuous signup requirement.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3835, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1235, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1513; Pub. L. 100-233, title VIII, § 801, Jan. 6, 1988, 101 Stat. 1710; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, § 1447(a), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3605; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, § 332(c), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 994, related to contracts, prior to the general amendment of this subpart by Pub. L. 107-171.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (c)(1)(B)(iii), (iv). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2111(a), added cl. (iii) and redesignated former cl. (iii) as (iv).

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2111(b), added subsec. (f).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the

date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

CONSERVATION RESERVE

Pub. L. 100-45, § 10, May 27, 1987, 101 Stat. 323, provided that: “Section 1235(a) of the Food Security Act of 1985 [16 U.S.C. 3835(a)] should be reviewed by the Secretary of Agriculture to ensure that the provisions thereof relating to exceptions to the three-year ownership requirement with respect to eligibility for the conservation reserve are being implemented in a manner to encourage inclusion of producer-owned land in the conservation reserve. However, any such exception to the three-year requirement should be made only if the Secretary determines that the land involved (1) was not acquired for the purpose of placing the land in the conservation reserve or (2) otherwise meets the criteria for exceptions made under section 1235(a).”

§ 3835a. Conversion of land subject to contract to other conserving uses

(a) Conversion to trees

(1) In general

The Secretary shall permit an owner or operator that has entered into a contract under this subpart that is in effect on November 28, 1990, to convert areas of highly erodible cropland that are subject to the contract, and that are devoted to vegetative cover, from that use to hardwood trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts, or wildlife corridors.

(2) Terms

(A) Extension of contract

With respect to a contract that is modified under this section that provides for the planting of hardwood trees, windbreaks, shelterbelts, or wildlife corridors, if the original term of the contract was less than 15 years, the owner or operator may extend the contract to a term of not to exceed 15 years.

(B) Cost share assistance

The Secretary shall pay 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation measures and practices authorized under this subsection for which the Secretary determines the cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest.

(b) Conversion to wetland

The Secretary shall permit an owner or operator that has entered into a contract under this subpart that is in effect on November 28, 1990, to restore areas of highly erodible cropland that are devoted to vegetative cover under the contract to wetland if—

(1) the areas are prior converted wetland;

(2) the owner or operator of the areas enters into an agreement to provide the Secretary with a long-term or permanent easement under subpart C covering the areas;

(3) there is a high probability that the prior converted area can be successfully restored to wetland status; and

(4) the restoration of the areas otherwise meets the requirements of subpart C.

(c) Limitation

The Secretary shall not incur, through a conversion under this section, any additional ex-

¹ See References in Text note below.

pense on the acres, including the expense involved in the original establishment of the vegetative cover, that would result in cost share for costs under this section in excess of the costs that would have been subject to cost share for the new practice had that practice been the original practice.

(d) Condition of contract

An owner or operator shall as a condition of entering into a contract under subsection (a) of this section participate in the Forest Stewardship Program established under section 2103a of this title.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1235A, as added Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2101(a), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 251.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Prior sections 3835a and 3836 were omitted in the general amendment of this subpart by Pub. L. 107-171.

Section 3835a, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1235A, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1435, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3582; amended Pub. L. 102-324, §1(b), July 22, 1992, 106 Stat. 447, related to conversion of land subject to contract to other conserving uses.

Section 3836, Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1236, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1514; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §§1436, 1447(a), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3583, 3605; Pub. L. 107-76, title VII, §759(b)(1), Nov. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 741, related to cropland base and allotment history.

A prior section 3836a, Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §387, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1020, related to Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2502(b), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 267. See section 3839bb-1 of this title.

SUBPART C—WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM

§ 3837. Wetlands reserve program

(a) Establishment and purposes

(1) Establishment

The Secretary shall establish a wetlands reserve program to assist owners of eligible lands in restoring and protecting wetlands.

(2) Purposes

The purposes of the wetlands reserve program are to restore, protect, or enhance wetlands on private or tribal lands that are eligible under subsections (c) and (d).

(b) Enrollment conditions

(1) Maximum enrollment

The total number of acres enrolled in the wetlands reserve program shall not exceed 3,041,200 acres.

(2) Methods of enrollment

Subject to paragraph (3), the Secretary shall enroll acreage into the wetlands reserve program through the use of permanent easements, 30-year easements, restoration cost share agreements, or any combination of those options.

(3) Acreage owned by Indian tribes

In the case of acreage owned by an Indian tribe, the Secretary shall enroll acreage into the wetlands reserve program through the use of—

(A) a 30-year contract (the value of which shall be equivalent to the value of a 30-year easement);

(B) restoration cost-share agreements; or
(C) any combination of the options described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(c) Eligibility

For purposes of enrolling land in the wetland reserve established under this subpart during the 1991 through 2012 fiscal years, private or tribal land shall be eligible to be placed into such reserve if the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior at the local level, determines that—

(1) such land maximizes wildlife benefits and wetland values and functions;

(2) such land is—

(A) farmed wetland or converted wetland, together with the adjacent land that is functionally dependent on the wetlands, except that converted wetland with respect to which the conversion was not commenced prior to December 23, 1985, shall not be eligible to be enrolled in the program under this section; or

(B) cropland or grassland that was used for agricultural production prior to flooding from the natural overflow of a closed basin lake or pothole, as determined by the Secretary, together (where practicable) with the adjacent land that is functionally dependent on the cropland or grassland; and

(3) the likelihood of the successful restoration of such land and the resultant wetland values merit inclusion of such land in the program taking into consideration the cost of such restoration.

(d) Other eligible land

The Secretary may include in the wetland reserve established under this subpart, together with land that is eligible under subsection (c) of this section, land that maximizes wildlife benefits and that is—

(1) farmed wetland and adjoining lands, enrolled in the conservation reserve, with the highest wetland functions and values, and that are likely to return to production after they leave the conservation reserve;

(2) other wetland of an owner that would not otherwise be eligible if the Secretary determines that the inclusion of such wetland in such easement would significantly add to the functional value of the easement; or

(3) riparian areas that link wetlands that are protected by easements or some other device or circumstance that achieves the same purpose as an easement.

(e) Ineligible land

The Secretary may not acquire easements on—

(1) land that contains timber stands established under the conservation reserve under subpart B; or

(2) pasture land established to trees under the conservation reserve under subpart B.

(f) Termination of existing contract

The Secretary may terminate or modify an existing contract entered into under section 3831(a) of this title if eligible land that is subject to such contract is transferred into the program established by this subpart.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, § 1237, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, § 1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3584; amended Pub. L. 102-237, title II, § 204(6), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1855; Pub. L. 103-66, title I, § 1402(c), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 333; Pub. L. 104-127, title III, § 333(a)-(c), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 995; Pub. L. 105-277, div. A, § 101(a) [title VII, § 752], Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681, 2681-32; Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §§ 2201, 2202, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 252; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §§ 2201-2203(a), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1036, 1037; Pub. L. 110-246, § 4(a), title II, §§ 2201-2203(a), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1764, 1765.)

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2201, amended subsec. (a) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The Secretary shall establish a wetlands reserve program to assist owners of eligible lands in restoring and protecting wetlands.”

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2202(1), added par. (1) and struck out former par. (1). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “The total number of acres enrolled in the wetlands reserve program shall not exceed 2,275,000 acres, of which, to the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall enroll 250,000 acres in each calendar year.”

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2202(2), substituted “Subject to paragraph (3), the Secretary” for “The Secretary”.

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2202(3), added par. (3).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2203(a)(1), in introductory provisions, substituted “1991 through 2012 fiscal years” for “1991 through 2007 calendar years” and “private or tribal land shall be eligible” for “land shall be eligible”.

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 110-246, § 2203(a)(2), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “such land is farmed wetland or converted wetland, together with adjacent lands that are functionally dependent on such wetlands, except that converted wetlands where the conversion was not commenced prior to December 23, 1985, shall not be eligible to be enrolled in the program under this section; and”.

2002—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-171, § 2202(1), added subsec. (b) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (b). Text read as follows:

“(1) MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT.—The total number of acres enrolled in the wetlands reserve program shall not exceed 975,000 acres.

“(2) METHODS OF ENROLLMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), effective beginning October 1, 1996, to the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall enroll into the wetlands reserve program—

“(i) 1/3 of the acres through the use of permanent easements;

“(ii) 1/3 of the acres through the use of 30-year easements; and

“(iii) 1/3 of the acres through the use of restoration cost-share agreements.

“(B) TEMPORARY EASEMENTS.—Effective beginning October 1, 1996, the Secretary shall not enroll acres in the wetlands reserve program through the use of new permanent easements until the Secretary has enrolled at least 75,000 acres in the program through the use of temporary easements.

“(C) For purposes of subparagraph (A), to the maximum extent practicable should be interpreted to mean that acceptance of wetlands reserve program bids may be in proportion to landowner interest expressed in program options.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-171, § 2201, substituted “2007” for “2002” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 107-171, § 2202(2), struck out heading and text of subsec. (g). Text read as follows: “The Secretary shall enroll lands in the wetland reserve through the purchase of easements as provided for in section 3837a of this title.”

1998—Subsec. (b)(2)(C). Pub. L. 105-277 added subpar. (C).

1996—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-127, § 333(a), added subsec. (b) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (b). Text read as follows: “The Secretary shall enroll into the wetlands reserve program—

“(1) a total of not less than 330,000 acres by the end of the 1995 calendar year; and

“(2) a total of not less than 975,000 acres during the 1991 through 2000 calendar years.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-127, § 333(b), substituted “2002” for “2000” in introductory provisions, added par. (1), and redesignated former pars. (1) and (2) as (2) and (3), respectively.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 104-127, § 333(c), in introductory provisions, inserted “, land that maximizes wildlife benefits and that is” after “subsection (c) of this section” and, in par. (2), substituted “or” for “and” at end.

1993—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 103-66, § 1402(c)(1), added subsec. (b) and struck out former subsec. (b) “NUMBER OF ACRES” which read as follows: “To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall attempt to enroll into the wetlands reserve program, 1,000,000 acres of land during the 1991 through 1995 calendar years; except that the Secretary may not enroll more than 200,000 acres in 1991, 400,000 acres in the 1991 to 1992 period, 600,000 acres in the 1991 to 1993 period, 800,000 acres in the 1991 to 1994 period, and 1,000,000 acres in the 1991 to 1995 period.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 103-66, § 1402(c)(2), substituted “2000” for “1995”.

1991—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 102-237 substituted “subsection (c)” for “subsection (d)” in introductory provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

EFFECT OF 1996 AMENDMENTS ON EXISTING AGREEMENTS

Section 333(f) of Pub. L. 104-127 provided that: “The amendments made by this section [amending this section and sections 3837a and 3837c of this title] shall not affect the validity or terms of any agreements entered into by the Secretary of Agriculture under subchapter C of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3837 et seq.) before the date of enactment of this Act [Apr. 4, 1996] or any payments required to be made in connection with the agreements.”

§ 3837a. Easements and agreements

(a) In general

To be eligible to place land into the wetland reserve under this subpart, the owner of such land shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary—

(1) to grant an easement on such land to the Secretary;

(2) to implement a wetland easement conservation plan as provided for in this section;

(3) to create and record an appropriate deed restriction in accordance with applicable State law to reflect the easement agreed to under this subpart with respect to such lands; and

(4) to provide a written statement of consent to such easement signed by those holding a security interest in the land.

(b) Terms of easement

An owner granting an easement under subsection (a) of this section shall be required to provide for the restoration and protection of the functional values of wetland pursuant to a wetland easement conservation plan that—

(1) permits—

(A) repairs, improvements, and inspections on such land that are necessary to maintain existing public drainage systems if such land is subsequently restored to the condition required by the terms of the easement; and

(B) landowners to control public access on the easement areas while identifying access routes to be used for wetland restoration activities and management and easement monitoring;

(2) prohibits—

(A) the alteration of wildlife habitat and other natural features of such land, unless specifically permitted by the plan;

(B) the spraying of such land with chemicals or the mowing of such land, except where such spraying or mowing is permitted by the plan or is necessary—

(i) to comply with Federal or State noxious weed control laws;

(ii) to comply with a Federal or State emergency pest treatment program; or

(iii) to meet habitat needs of specific wildlife species; and

(C) any activities to be carried out on such participating landowner's or successor's land that is immediately adjacent to, and functionally related to, the land that is subject to the easement if such activities will alter, degrade, or otherwise diminish the functional value of the eligible land; and

(D) the adoption of any other practice that would tend to defeat the purposes of this subpart, as determined by the Secretary;

(3) provides for the efficient and effective restoration of the functional values of wetlands; and

(4) includes such additional provisions as the Secretary determines are desirable to carry out this subpart or to facilitate the practical administration thereof.

(c) Restoration plans

The development of a restoration plan, including any compatible use, under this section shall be made through the local Natural Resources Conservation Service representative, in consultation with the State technical committee.

(d) Compatible uses

Wetland reserve program lands may be used for compatible economic uses, including such activities as hunting and fishing, managed timber harvest, or periodic haying or grazing, if such use is specifically permitted by the plan and consistent with the long-term protection and enhancement of the wetlands resources for which the easement was established.

(e) Type and length of easement

A conservation easement granted under this section—

(1) shall be in a recordable form; and

(2) shall be for 30 years, permanent, or the maximum duration allowed under applicable State laws.

(f) Compensation

(1) Determination

Effective on the date of the enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, the Secretary shall pay as compensation for a conservation easement acquired under this subpart the lowest of—

(A) the fair market value of the land, as determined by the Secretary, using the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices or an area-wide market analysis or survey;

(B) the amount corresponding to a geographical cap, as determined by the Secretary in regulations; or

(C) the offer made by the landowner.

(2) Form of payment

Compensation for an easement shall be provided by the Secretary in the form of a cash payment, in an amount determined under paragraph (1) and specified in the easement agreement.

(3) Payment schedule for easements

(A) Easements valued at \$500,000 or less

For easements valued at \$500,000 or less, the Secretary may provide easement payments in not more than 30 annual payments.

(B) Easements in excess of \$500,000

For easements valued at more than \$500,000, the Secretary may provide easement payments in at least 5, but not more than 30 annual payments, except that, if the Secretary determines it would further the purposes of the program, the Secretary may make a lump sum payment for such an easement.

(4) Restoration agreement payment limitation

Payments made to a person or legal entity, directly or indirectly, pursuant to a restoration cost-share agreement under this subpart may not exceed, in the aggregate, \$50,000 per year.

(5) Enrollment procedure

Lands may be enrolled under this subpart through the submission of bids under a procedure established by the Secretary.

(g) Violation

On the violation of the terms or conditions of the easement or related agreement entered into under subsection (a) of this section, the easement shall remain in force and the Secretary may require the owner to refund all or part of any payments received by the owner under this subpart, together with interest thereon as determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(h) Wetlands reserve enhancement program

(1) Program authorized

The Secretary may enter into 1 or more agreements with a State (including a political subdivision or agency of a State), nongovernmental organization, or Indian tribe to carry

out a special wetlands reserve enhancement program that the Secretary determines would advance the purposes of this subpart.

(2) Reserved rights pilot program

(A) Reservation of grazing rights

As part of the wetlands reserve enhancement program, the Secretary shall carry out a pilot program for land in which a landowner may reserve grazing rights in the warranty easement deed restriction if the Secretary determines that the reservation and use of the grazing rights—

- (i) is compatible with the land subject to the easement;
- (ii) is consistent with the long-term wetland protection and enhancement goals for which the easement was established; and
- (iii) complies with a conservation plan.

(B) Duration

The pilot program established under this paragraph shall terminate on September 30, 2012.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1237A, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3585; amended Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §333(d), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 996; Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2203, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 252; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §§2204-2206, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1038, 1039; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §§2204-2206, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1766, 1767.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The date of the enactment of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, referred to in subsec. (f)(1), is the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-246, which was approved June 18, 2008.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (b)(2)(B). Pub. L. 110-246, §2204, struck out “or” at end of cl. (i), substituted “; or” for “; and” at end of cl. (ii), and added cl. (iii).

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 110-246, §2205, amended subsec. (f) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “Compensation for easements acquired by the Secretary under this subpart shall be made in cash in such amount as is agreed to and specified in the easement agreement, but not to exceed the fair market value of the land less the fair market value of such land encumbered by the easement. Lands may be enrolled through the submission of bids under a procedure established by the Secretary. Compensation may be provided in not less than 5, nor more than 30, annual payments of equal or unequal size, as agreed to by the owner and the Secretary.”

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 110-246, §2206, added subsec. (h).

2002—Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 107-171 struck out heading and text of subsec. (h). Text read as follows: “The Secretary may enroll land into the wetlands reserve program through an agreement that requires the landowner to restore wetlands on the land, if the agreement does not provide the Secretary with an easement.”

1996—Pub. L. 104-127, §333(d)(1), inserted “and agreements” after “Easements” in section catchline.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-127, §333(d)(2), added subsec. (c) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (c). Text read as follows:

“(1) PLANS.—The development of restoration plans under this section shall be made through the agreement of the local representative of the Soil Conservation Service and a representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service. If agreement cannot be reached at the local level under the preceding sentence within a reasonable period of time, such plans shall be referred to the State Conservationist, who in developing such plans under this paragraph, shall consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

“(2) REPORT.—The State Conservationist and a representative of the Fish and Wildlife Service shall report to their respective national offices concerning all plans developed under paragraph (1) at the State level as a result of an agreement not being reached at the local level.”

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 104-127, §333(d)(3), substituted “Compensation may be provided in not less than 5, nor more than 30, annual payments of equal or unequal size, as agreed to by the owner and the Secretary.” for “Compensation may be provided in not less than 5 nor more than 20 annual payments of either equal or unequal size, except in the case of a permanent easement, a single lump-sum payment may be provided, as agreed on by the owner and the Secretary.”

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 104-127, §333(d)(4), added subsec. (h).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

EFFECT OF 1996 AMENDMENTS ON EXISTING AGREEMENTS

Amendments made by section 333 of Pub. L. 104-127 not to affect validity or terms of agreements entered into by Secretary of Agriculture under this subpart before Apr. 4, 1996, or payments required to be made in connection with such agreements, see section 333(f) of Pub. L. 104-127, set out as a note under section 3837 of this title.

§ 3837b. Duties of owners

Under the terms of an agreement entered into under this subpart, an owner and operator of the land that is subject to an easement under this subpart shall agree to comply with the terms of the easement and related agreements and shall agree to the permanent retirement of any existing cropland base and allotment history for such land under any program administered by the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1237B, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3587.)

§ 3837c. Duties of Secretary

(a) In general

In return for the granting of an easement by an owner under this subpart, the Secretary shall—

- (1) share the cost of carrying out the establishment of conservation measures and practices, and the protection of the wetland functions and values, including necessary maintenance activities, as set forth in the plan to the extent that the Secretary determines that cost sharing is appropriate and in the public interest; and

- (2) provide necessary technical assistance to assist owners in complying with the terms and conditions of the easement and the plan.

(b) Cost-share and technical assistance**(1) Easements**

Effective beginning October 1, 1996, in making cost-share payments under subsection (a)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall—

(A) in the case of a permanent easement, pay the owner an amount that is not less than 75 percent, but not more than 100 percent, of the eligible costs; and

(B) in the case of a 30-year easement, pay the owner an amount that is not less than 50 percent, but not more than 75 percent, of the eligible costs.

(2) Restoration cost-share agreements

In making cost-share payments in connection with a restoration cost-share agreement entered into under section 3837a(h)¹ of this title, the Secretary shall pay the owner an amount that is not less than 50 percent, but not more than 75 percent, of the eligible costs.

(3) Technical assistance

The Secretary shall provide owners with technical assistance to assist owners in complying with the terms of easements and restoration cost-share agreements.

(c) Ranking of offers**(1) Conservation benefits and funding considerations**

When evaluating offers from landowners, the Secretary may consider—

(A) the conservation benefits of obtaining an easement or other interest in the land;

(B) the cost-effectiveness of each easement or other interest in eligible land, so as to maximize the environmental benefits per dollar expended; and

(C) whether the landowner or another person is offering to contribute financially to the cost of the easement or other interest in the land to leverage Federal funds.

(2) Additional considerations

In determining the acceptability of easement offers, the Secretary may take into consideration—

(A) the extent to which the purposes of the easement program would be achieved on the land;

(B) the productivity of the land; and

(C) the on-farm and off-farm environmental threats if the land is used for the production of agricultural commodities.

(d) Easement priority

In carrying out this subpart, to the extent practicable, taking into consideration costs and future agricultural and food needs, the Secretary shall give priority to obtaining permanent conservation easements before shorter term conservation easements and, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, shall place priority on acquiring easements based on the value of the easement for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1237C, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104

Stat. 3587; amended Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §333(e), Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 996; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2207, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1039; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2207, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1767.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 3837a(h) of this title, referred to in subsec. (b)(2), was repealed by Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2203, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 252.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 110-246, §2207(1), inserted “including necessary maintenance activities,” after “values.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 110-246, §2207(2), added subsec. (c) and struck out former subsec. (c). Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “In determining the acceptability of easement offers, the Secretary may take into consideration—

“(1) the extent to which the purposes of the easement program would be achieved on the land;

“(2) the productivity of the land; and

“(3) the on-farm and off-farm environmental threats if the land is used for the production of agricultural commodities.”

1996—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-127 added subsec. (b) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (b). Text read as follows: “In making cost share payments under subsection (a)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall pay the owner an amount that is not less than 50 percent but not more than 75 percent of eligible costs with respect to an easement which is not permanent, and not less than 75 percent but not more than 100 percent of eligible costs with respect to a permanent easement.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

EFFECT OF 1996 AMENDMENTS ON EXISTING AGREEMENTS

Amendments made by section 333 of Pub. L. 104-127 not to affect validity or terms of agreements entered into by Secretary of Agriculture under this subpart before Apr. 4, 1996, or payments required to be made in connection with such agreements, see section 333(f) of Pub. L. 104-127, set out as a note under section 3837 of this title.

§ 3837d. Payments**(a) Time of payment**

The Secretary shall provide payment for obligations incurred by the Secretary under this subpart—

(1) with respect to any cost sharing obligation as soon as possible after the obligation is incurred; and

(2) with respect to any annual easement payment obligation incurred by the Secretary as soon as possible after October 1 of each calendar year.

(b) Payments to others

If an owner who is entitled to a payment under this subpart dies, becomes incompetent, is

¹ See References in Text note below.

otherwise unable to receive such payment, or is succeeded by another person who renders or completes the required performance, the Secretary shall make such payment, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary and without regard to any other provision of law, in such manner as the Secretary determines is fair and reasonable in light of all of the circumstances.

(c) Payment limitation

(1) In general

The total amount of payments that a person or legal entity may receive, directly or indirectly, under this subpart for any year may not exceed \$50,000, except such limitation shall not apply with respect to payments for perpetual or 30-year easements or under 30-year contracts.

(2) Regulations

The Secretary shall issue regulations prescribing such rules as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure a fair and reasonable application of the limitation contained in this subsection.

(3) Other payments

Easement payments received by an owner shall be in addition to, and not affect, the total amount of payments that such owner is otherwise eligible to receive under this Act, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, or the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.).

(d) Exemption from automatic sequester

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no order issued under section 902 of title 2 shall affect any payment under this subpart.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1237D, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3588; amended Pub. L. 105-277, div. A, §101(a) [title VII, §751], Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2681, 2681-32; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §§2208, 2209, May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1040; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §§2208, 2209, June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1768.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This Act, referred to in subsec. (c)(3), is Pub. L. 99-198, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1354, as amended, known as the Food Security Act of 1985. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title of 1985 Amendment note set out under section 1281 of Title 7, Agriculture, and Tables.

The Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, referred to in subsec. (c)(3), is Pub. L. 101-624, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3359, as amended. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title of 1990 Amendment note set out under section 1421 of Title 7 and Tables.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, referred to in subsec. (c)(3), is act Oct. 31, 1949, ch. 792, 63 Stat. 1051, as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 35A (§1421 et seq.) of Title 7. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1421 of Title 7 and Tables.

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 110-246, §2208, substituted “The total amount of payments that a person or legal entity may receive, directly or indirectly,” for “The total amount of easement payments made to a person” and inserted “or under 30-year contracts” before period at end.

Subsec. (c)(4). Pub. L. 110-246, §2209, struck out par. (4). Text read as follows: “The provisions of this subsection that limit payments to any person, and section 1305(d) of the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 1987 (7 U.S.C. 1308 note), shall not be applicable to payments received by a State, political subdivision, or agency thereof in connection with agreements entered into under a special wetland and environmental easement enhancement program carried out by that entity that has been approved by the Secretary. The Secretary may enter into such agreements for payments to States, political subdivisions, or agencies thereof that the Secretary determines will advance the purposes of this subpart.”

1998—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 105-277 inserted “or 30-year” after “perpetual”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

§ 3837e. Changes in ownership; agreement modification; termination

(a) Limitations

No easement shall be created under this subpart on land that has changed ownership during the preceding 7-year period unless—

(1) the new ownership was acquired by will or succession as a result of the death of the previous owner;

(2)(A) the ownership change occurred because of foreclosure on the land; and

(B) immediately before the foreclosure, the owner of the land exercises a right of redemption from the mortgage holder in accordance with State law; or

(3) the Secretary determines that the land was acquired under circumstances that give adequate assurances that such land was not acquired for the purposes of placing it in the program established by this subpart.

(b) Modification; termination

(1) Modification

The Secretary may modify an easement acquired from, or a related agreement with, an owner under this subpart if—

(A) the current owner agrees to such modification; and

(B) the Secretary determines that such modification is desirable—

(i) to carry out this subpart;

(ii) to facilitate the practical administration of this subpart; or

(iii) to achieve such other goals as the Secretary determines are appropriate and consistent with this subpart.

(2) Termination

(A) In general

The Secretary may terminate an easement created with an owner under this subpart if—

- (i) the current owner agrees to such termination; and
- (ii) the Secretary determines that such termination would be in the public interest.

(B) Notice

At least 90 days before taking any action to terminate under paragraph (A) all easements entered into under this subpart, the Secretary shall provide written notice of such action to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1237E, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3589; amended Pub. L. 107-171, title II, §2204, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 253; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2203(b), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1037; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2203(b), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1765.)

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-246, §2203(b), substituted “during the preceding 7-year period” for “in the preceding 12 months” in introductory provisions.

2002—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 107-171 added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “the new ownership was acquired before January 1, 1990; or”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

§ 3837f. Administration and funding**(a) Delegation of easement administration**

The Secretary may delegate any of the easement management, monitoring, and enforcement responsibilities of the Secretary to Federal or State agencies that have the appropriate authority, expertise, and resources necessary to carry out such delegated responsibilities.

(b) Regulations

Not later than 180 days after November 28, 1990, the Secretary shall issue such regulations as are necessary to carry out this subpart.

(c) Prairie Pothole Region survey and reallocation**(1) Survey**

The Secretary shall conduct a survey during fiscal year 2008 and each subsequent fiscal year for the purpose of determining interest and allocations for the Prairie Pothole Region to enroll eligible land described in section 3837(c)(2)(B) of this title.

(2) Annual adjustment

The Secretary shall make an adjustment to the allocation for an interested State for a fiscal year, based on the results of the survey conducted under paragraph (1) for the State during the previous fiscal year.

(Pub. L. 99-198, title XII, §1237F, as added Pub. L. 101-624, title XIV, §1438, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3589; Pub. L. 110-234, title II, §2203(c), May 22, 2008, 122 Stat. 1037; Pub. L. 110-246, §4(a), title II, §2203(c), June 18, 2008, 122 Stat. 1664, 1765.)

CODIFICATION

Pub. L. 110-234 and Pub. L. 110-246 made identical amendments to this section. The amendments by Pub. L. 110-234 were repealed by section 4(a) of Pub. L. 110-246.

AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 110-246, §2203(c), added subsec. (c).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment of this section and repeal of Pub. L. 110-234 by Pub. L. 110-246 effective May 22, 2008, the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110-234, see section 4 of Pub. L. 110-246, set out as an Effective Date note under section 8701 of Title 7, Agriculture.

PART II—CONSERVATION SECURITY AND FARMLAND PROTECTION

SUBPART A—CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

§ 3838. Definitions

In this subpart:

(1) Base payment

The term “base payment” means an amount that is—

(A) determined in accordance with the rate described in section 3838c(b)(1)(A) of this title; and

(B) paid to a producer under a conservation security contract in accordance with clause (i) of subparagraph (C), (D), or (E) of section 3838c(b)(1) of this title, as appropriate.

(2) Beginning farmer or rancher

The term “beginning farmer or rancher” has the meaning given the term under section 1991(a) of title 7.

(3) Conservation practice

The term “conservation practice” means a conservation farming practice described in section 3838a(d)(4) of this title that—

(A) requires planning, implementation, management, and maintenance; and

(B) promotes 1 or more of the purposes described in section 3838a(a) of this title.

(4) Conservation security contract

The term “conservation security contract” means a contract described in section 3838a(e) of this title.

(5) Conservation security plan

The term “conservation security plan” means a plan described in section 3838a(c) of this title.

(6) Conservation security program

The term “conservation security program” means the program established under section 3838a(a) of this title.

(7) Enhanced payment

The term “enhanced payment” means the amount paid to a producer under a conserva-