



April 6, 2004

OKLAHOMA BULLETIN NO. OK300-4-12**SUBJECT: PGM – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) – Fiscal Year 2004
Request for Proposals and Related Information**

Purpose: To transmit to field offices current information regarding the FRPP request for proposals and press release for conducting program outreach.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2004

Immediate Action Required – Press Release

NRCS published the fiscal year 2004 request for proposals (RFP) for the FRPP in the Federal Register on March 17, 2004. The FRPP will provide up to \$84 million in financial assistance (\$1.219 million for Oklahoma) this fiscal year ending September 30, 2004. Proposals for funding must be received in the NRCS State Office by close of business on May 3, 2004. NRCS is requesting proposals from federally recognized Indian tribes, states, units of local government, and nongovernmental organizations to cooperate in the acquisition of conservation easements on farms and ranches. *(Note: Private individuals are not eligible to offer proposals directly to NRCS for the FRPP.)* Eligible land includes farm and ranch land that has prime, unique, or other productive soil, or that contains historical or archaeological resources. These lands must also be subject to a pending offer from eligible entities for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting conversion of that land to nonagricultural uses. The Federal Register notice is attached for your information.

This is Oklahoma's third year to offer financial assistance funding for the FRPP. In 2001, the Trust for Public Land, in cooperation with the Norman Area Land Conservancy, was awarded an agreement for farmland preservation. Land Legacy and the Norman Area Land Conservancy submitted proposals and were awarded agreements in 2003 for land preservation efforts in Cleveland, Comanche, LeFlore, Roger Mills, and Tulsa counties. NRCS will provide no more than 50% of the easement purchase price for the conservation easement. The eligible entity is responsible for a cash contribution to the purchase of the easement of no less than 25% of the easement purchase price. This program is an important tool for those communities and organizations committed to long-term conservation of agricultural lands by protecting farm and ranch land from conversion to non-agricultural uses through voluntary conservation easements. Agricultural land conversion rates in Oklahoma are estimated to exceed 45,000 acres per year.

Field Offices are to expedite disseminating public information announcing this RFP. A sample FRPP press release is available for local adaptation at:

<http://intranet.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/PGM/FRPP/FRPPReqforproNewsRel04.doc>

Additional information is available to NRCS personnel in order to understand the FRPP, the RFP process, and respond to questions by interested parties.

- The Federal Register Notice of the Request for Proposals. The RFP is provided as an attachment and can be accessed at the following web address –
http://intranet.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/PGM/FRPP/ReqforProFedReg04_6109.pdf

(MORE)

DIST: AO

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

- Frequently Asked Questions -
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmland/2002/pdf/FRPPQnA.pdf>
- Oklahoma's State FRPP Plan and related information available at:
<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/OK/prog/frpp/ok04frppplan1103.pdf>
- The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Programs Manual, a Supplement to the Conservation Programs Manual (440-V-CPM), Part 519, is available at:
http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/M/M_440_519.htm

This is TIME SENSITIVE. Proposals from eligible entities must be developed in accordance with the RFP and submitted to M. Darrel Dominick, State Conservationist, NRCS State Office, by COB May 3, 2004. District Conservationists, Tribal Conservationists, and Tribal Liaisons will ensure that information is disseminated regarding this program. If you have any questions, contact your respective Program Liaison or the Programs Staff.

/s/ Leslie R. Conner, Acting For

M. DARREL DOMINICK
State Conservationist

Attachments