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GRAZING BROKER HELPS EXPIRING CRP LANDOWNERS IN SW WISCONSIN

Local non-profit organization connects landowners with livestock producers for mutual benefit

DODGEVILLE, WI – Landowners enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) have alternative options if their CRP contracts expire and are not renewed. According to Robert Bauer, Grazing Broker for Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, “Managed haying or grazing can provide to landowners all of the income and tax benefits of CRP while providing healthy wildlife, soils, and agriculture to our communities. With our approach you don’t have to own livestock and you don’t have to sacrifice rental income.”

The effort is part of the regional Grazing Broker project that enhances pastures and other grasslands by bringing together landowners and livestock producers in lease relationships. The Grazing Broker connects with CRP landowners to help them implement managed grazing systems on the land with financial assistance from the USDA.

Southwest Badger RC&D recently established an agreement with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin to service eligible grazing plan applicants in nine counties in Southwest Wisconsin, including Iowa, Grant, Green, Lafayette, Sauk, Richland, Crawford, Vernon, and La Crosse Counties. The agreement enhances the level of service available to landowners and farmers for managed grazing.

Local FSA offices are not currently taking applications to renew or enroll acres into the CRP because the national cap of twenty-four million acres has been reached. However, landowners may be eligible for financial and technical assistance from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement managed grazing, organic certification, or other resource-conserving practices on former CRP acres.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds the Grazing Broker project through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and through a contribution agreement with the Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). For more information contact Robert Bauer at 608-732-1202, robert.bauer@swbadger.org, or visit www.swbadger.org/managedgrazing.

Southwest Badger Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization working in the Southwest Wisconsin region. The organization’s mission is to implement natural resource conservation and rural economic development in the area through education and best practices relating to agriculture, grassland, forests, and surface waters.

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