



### Fiscal Year 2015 Biomass Crop Assistance Program

#### OVERVIEW

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), created by the 2008 Farm Bill and reauthorized with modifications by the 2014 Farm Bill, is part of the national strategy to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil, improve domestic energy security, and reduce carbon pollution, by developing more agricultural products made in rural America

BCAP provides funds to assist farmers and forester landowners with growing, maintaining, and harvesting biomass that can be used for energy or bio-based products. BCAP provides assistance in three ways:

- Establishment payments. For growing new biomass crops, BCAP can cover up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing a new, perennial energy crop<sup>1</sup> ;
- Maintenance payments (annual payments). To maintain the new biomass crop as it matures until harvest, BCAP can provide up to five years of assistance for an herbaceous crop, or up to 15 years for a woody crop;
- Retrieval payments (matching payments). To collect existing biomass residues that are not economically retrievable, BCAP can help with the cost of sustainably harvesting and transporting agricultural or forest residues to an energy facility (biomass conversion facility)<sup>2</sup>.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) reauthorized BCAP with an annual mandatory funding level of \$25 million through FY 2018, of which between 10 and 50 percent (no greater than \$12.5 million) is reserved for matching payments. BCAP is administered by the U.S Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA).

#### PROJECT AREAS

A project area has specified boundaries approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and includes producers with contract acreage (i.e. crops under contract with USDA to receive establishment and maintenance payments) that, upon maturity, will be supplied to an existing or in-progress biomass conversion facility. The project area is physically located within an economically practicable distance from the biomass conversion facility.

#### ELIGIBLE CROPS

For establishment and maintenance payments in project areas, eligible biomass (or “eligible crops”) does not include plants that are invasive or noxious, as determined by USDA, or “conventional” crops (crops that are eligible to receive payments under title I of the 2014 Farm Bill), such as barley, corn, grain, sorghum, oats, rice or wheat, honey; mohair; oilseeds (including canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower seed, soybeans, sesame seed, and sunflower seed); peanuts; pulse; chickpeas, lentils and dry peas; dairy products; sugar; and wool and cotton boll fiber.

Other restrictions may apply. For full details on eligible crops, please consult your local FSA county office, or visit the web at [www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap).

<sup>1</sup> Up to \$750 per acre for underserved producers, or up to \$500 per acre for other producers.

<sup>2</sup> At the rate of up to \$1 for each \$1 per ton delivered to an approved biomass conversion facility, not to exceed \$20 per dry ton, for a period no longer than two years.

**ELIGIBLE MATERIALS**

For retrieval payments, eligible biomass (or “eligible materials” such as certain agricultural and forestry residues) includes:

- Agricultural or crop residues (i.e. crop residues remaining in the field after harvest of conventional crops), woody agriculture residues, like orchard waste, that are removed directly from land, in accordance with an approved conservation plan;
- Woody forest residues removed directly from that land that are byproducts of preventative treatments that reduce the threat of forest fires, disease or insect infestation; that do not have an existing market, that are removed directly from the land, in accordance with an approved forest stewardship or equivalent plan.

Biomass that is ineligible for retrieval payments include:

- Conventional crops that are eligible to receive payments under Title I of the 2014 Farm Bill;
- Secondary agricultural or forest residues resulting from the processing activity of a delivered primary product of biomass; Animal waste or byproducts, bagasse, food and yard waste, algae.

Other limitations may apply. For full details on eligible materials, please consult your local FSA county office, or visit the web at [www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap).

**APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PERIODS FOR FY 2015**

Enrollment periods for BCAP funding will be announced by news release in the spring of 2015. To enroll in electronic updates for upcoming BCAP announcements, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap).

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This fact sheet is intended for basic informational purposes only. For full information on specific program requirements and restrictions, please consult the USDA Farm Service Agency or visit the web at [www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap).

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, write to the address below or if you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).*

*If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*