Assistance Available

The Buffalo-Muddy Ork Creeks Watershed includes all land in Cleveland, Lincoln, and Gaston Counties located north of Highway 74 that drains into Buffalo, Muddy Fork, or Potts Creeks. It is an area characterized by severe sheet, rill, and gully erosion, especially on cropland. Over the years, the excessive erosion has resulted in a deterioration of the soil resource, reduced agricultural productivity, and severe sedimentation of the public and private waters in the watershed. As part of the ongoing land treatment effort to reduce the serious and rapid decline in the condidtion of the soil and water resource base, the Cleveland Soil and Water Conservation District is offering costshare assistance to those landowners or operators who desire to convert cropland to pasture or hayland.

Within the watershed, the Conservation District will provide a landowner or operator with 60 percent of the average cost of establishing an approved grass, legumen, or grass/legume cover on existing or recently idled cropland. Once established, the cover may be used as pasture or hayland. Approved covers include tall fescue, tall fescue/cover, sericea lespedeza, sericea lespedeza/tall fescue, and alfalfa/orchardgrass. Cost-share assistance to the landuser ranges from \$73.20 per acre for tall fescue to \$94.80 per acre for alfalfa/orchardgrass. The District requires that minimum per acre rates of lime, fertilizer, and seed be used to help ensure establishment of an adequate cover. Once established, it is required that a cover be maintained for 5 years.

Conditions are generally best for establishing a tall fescue or tall fescue/clover from September through October. Alfalfa/orchardgrass has a shorter season for establishment, showing best results when seeded from August 20 through September 20. Sericea lespedeza and tall fescue/sericea lespedesa are most readily established during the spring.

The ideal season for establishing most of these covers is fast approaching. Therefore, the Cleveland Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors urge all interested landusers to contact the Cleveland County Office of the Soil Conservation Service (482-1906) in the next few weeks. A Soil Conservationish can provide further information and assist the landuser in submitting an application for assistance. It is necessary for cost-share funds to be assigned to a landuser prior to establishment of a cover.

In addition to conversion of cropland to pasture or hayland, many other conservation practices are eligible for cost-share and technical assistance under the Buffalo-Muddy For Creeks Watershed Land Treatment Program. Payments of landusers range between 60 and 75 percent of the average cost of installation or application of a practice. A landowner of operator can receive up to \$100,000.00 in cost share assistance.

As with all USDA affiliated programs, this watershed land treatment assistance is open to all landowners or operators regadless of race, sex, or national origin.



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