



United States Department of Agriculture

NOV 17 2009

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Mr. William P. Roenigk  
Senior Vice President  
National Chicken Council  
1015 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 930  
Washington, D.C. 20005-2622

Dear Mr. Roenigk:

Thank you for your letter of October 19, 2009, cosigned by Mr. Chuck Lambert, regarding the draft Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The Secretary has asked that I respond on his behalf. I appreciate your concerns and your comments regarding CRP and its effectiveness.

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) published a CRP interim rule with request for comments in the Federal Register on June 29, 2009. This regulation provided for implementation of the new Farmable Wetlands Program, cost-sharing for tree thinning to improve the condition of resources on certain enrolled land, and adjusted gross income requirements to reflect the new limits in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). Other provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill, including managed harvesting, routine grazing, cropping history, county acreage limits, eligible land, and transition incentives currently are awaiting the completion of the SEIS before implementation may begin. Scoping for the SEIS has begun and CCC anticipates completion of the SEIS in early Summer 2010.

I understand the concerns mentioned in your letter and take them very seriously. We also need to consider the roles other Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs can play in protecting fragile lands. I assure you that your comments and suggestions will be given every consideration as we continue to address conservation needs nationwide. USDA will consider your comments and concerns about the Highly Erodible Land definition when finalizing the SEIS.

Again, thank you for your letter. Your letter and this response will be included in the official comment file for the SEIS. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns. A similar letter is being sent to Mr. Lambert.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James W. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James W. Miller  
Under Secretary  
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services