

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP is a new conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources. The program encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations. CSP provides opportunities to both recognize excellent stewards and deliver valuable new conservation.

Enhancements may include transition to organic grazing, organic pest management, solar powered electric fence systems, and rotation of supplement and feeding areas.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

GRP is another USDA-NRCS program available to help producers (including organic) protect, restore, and enhance their grasslands.

GRP emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to other uses.

Participants voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding. A grazing management plan is required for participants.

The program offers 10, 15, and 20 year rental contracts and permanent easement options.



For additional information, contact:

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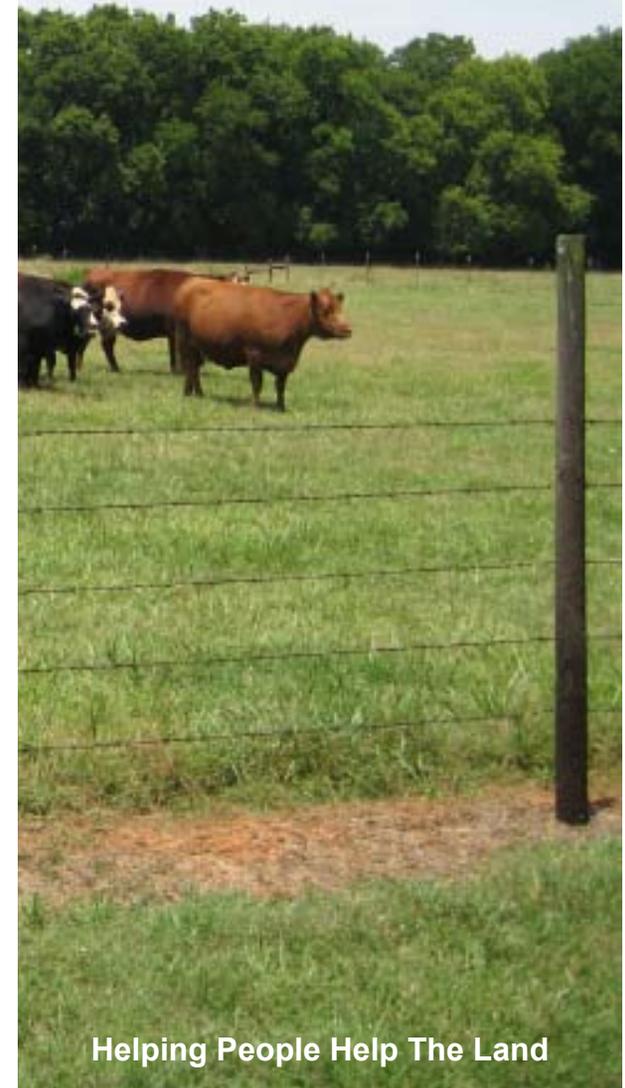
You may also visit Alabama NRCS online:
<http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/>

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Assistance For Certified Organic Livestock Producers In Alabama



NRCS Assistance for Certified Organic Livestock Producers

Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture. Market demand is rapidly increasing for organic, pasture finished, or natural beef.

To meet USDA livestock organic standards, cattle must be provided a total feed ration composed of agricultural products and forage that are organically produced and managed. Exceptions must follow organic regulations. Cattle must have access to pasture and the opportunity to exercise.

Pasture is defined as land used for livestock grazing that is managed to provide feed value and maintained to improve soil, water, and vegetative resources.

Grassfed beef may fit within the guidelines set by the National Organic Program (NOP). NOP is administered by the USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service. To learn more about organic certification, visit their website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/>.

Grassfed livestock producers may be interested in transitioning to organic production. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) provides funds to help producers with the transition.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help cattle producers with rotational grazing systems that can lower production costs, reduce animal stress, and improve herd health.

NRCS offers conservation practices for organic production through two programs:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is primarily used to provide financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices to address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy resources. A new organic provision targets organic producers and producers transitioning to organic production:

- Assistance is for conservation practices related to organic production.
- Producers are required to develop and carry out an organic system plan or carry out practices consistent with an organic system plan. Producers must be pursuing an organic certification or be in compliance with their organic certification.



Organically raised grass-fed cattle are given access to the outdoors, fresh air, water, sunshine, grass and pasture, and feed that meets organic feed requirements.

Some examples of EQIP assistance available to those in organic farming for livestock are:

- installing pollinator and/or trap habitats
- installing interior cross-fencing and watering for rotational grazing systems
- implementing other conservation practices tailored to the producer's operation.

Under EQIP, conservation practices for supporting organic farming may be offered with a higher payment rate to address special resource concerns. A producer can choose to implement any number of practices. Payment rates for each practice are available from your local NRCS office.



A well managed pasture following organic guidelines.