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## **ACRE Program Enrollment Opens on April 27**

**By Agri-Pulse staff**

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If you are interested in the new Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program, you can sign up beginning April 27, 2009. ACRE is a provision of the 2008 Farm Bill.

"The Average Crop Revenue Election program is an innovative alternative to the traditional farm safety," Secretary Tom Vilsack said. "This new option presents an opportunity for producers to review both programs and decide which one will work best for their operation."

Producers have until Aug.14, 2009, to make their decision for the 2009 crop. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.

Producers who elect the ACRE program for a farm agree to:

- ▶ forgo counter-cyclical payments;
- ▶ accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments; and
- ▶ accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm.

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created in the 2008 Farm Bill to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin was active in ensuring that the ACRE program was included in the 2008 farm bill. The ACRE program is based on the concept of legislation that Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) introduced last

Congress, which reflected a good deal of work, input and analysis provided by the American Farmland Trust, the National Corn Growers Association and many farmers.

“I encourage farmers to consider enrolling in the ACRE program. ACRE is a new and creative alternative to the traditional direct and counter-cyclical program and will benefit many of our producers both in Iowa and across the country,” says Harkin.

“Additionally, I was pleased when Secretary Vilsack announced last month that the deadline to enroll in the traditional program or the new ACRE program has been extended from June 1 until August 14. Since this is the first year producers can participate in ACRE, the extension will allow farmers extra time to consider program options and to discuss these alternatives with their lenders and with the owners of rented land.”

To elect ACRE for a farm, producers must complete Form CCC-509 ACRE, which irrevocably elects ACRE for the farm through crop year 2012. Form CCC-509, the contract to participate in ACRE, must then be completed each year the producer intends to participate and receive benefits.

For more information about the ACRE program please visit your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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