

# SOUTH BRANCH ROOT RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

## Financial Assistance Programs

# HAY SET-ASIDE PROGRAM



The purpose of this program is to convert acres planted to row crops to permanent cover in targeted areas while allowing harvesting of the cover crop. An incentive payment of \$50/acre/year is available for planting buffers in hay and/or grass on row cropland along streams, around sinkholes and wetlands, or on field headlands and field borders (33' minimum to 180' maximum width). The hay may be harvested as long as adequate ground cover is maintained. This program is an alternative to the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) which sets aside land but does not allow harvesting or grazing. The payment may also supplement rental rates for the first three years of new CCRP rental contracts for conservation buffers in the targeted areas.



- In southeast Minnesota, acreage in non-cultivated cropland and pastureland decreased from 627,700 acres in 1982 to 447,900 acres in 1997, a loss of 179,800 acres, which is a 28% decline.
- Mower County lost 75,300 acres of hay from 1940 to 2001, a loss of 86%.
- Fillmore County lost 42,700 acres of hay from 1940 to 2001, a 42% loss.

**Project Sponsors:**  
**Fillmore County**  
**Mower County**

These practices are limited to 20 acres/year for three years. Payments may be paired with other conservation payments if the other program's requirements are met.

- Annual payments of \$50/acre/year for three years for planting buffers of hay and/or grass on land currently in row crops along streams, sinkholes, and wetlands. Haying is allowed until September 15 in order to assure that adequate cover is maintained through the winter months. No fall tillage is allowed.
- The \$50/acre payment may be used to supplement new CCRP rental contracts for the first three years with a one-time upfront payment. Haying and grazing are not allowed under CCRP and would not be allowed on these acres.

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