

**Elimination of Tall Fescue from Missouri's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands**

1     **WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Conservation Reserve  
2     Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that helps agriculture producers use environmentally  
3     sensitive land for conservation benefits;

4     **AND WHEREAS**, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the CRP with technical  
5     support functions provided by USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) utilizing  
6     expertise afforded by the State Technical Committee (STC);

7     **AND WHEREAS** producers enrolled in the CRP plant or maintain long-term, resource-conserving  
8     cover to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality and enhance wildlife habitat;

9     **AND WHEREAS** Missouri currently has approximately 1.3 million acres enrolled in the CRP with  
10    65.8% enrolled in practices seeded to introduced, cool-season grass species which have become  
11    dominated by tall fescue and smooth brome;

12    **AND WHEREAS** USDA has announced another general sign-up that will occur March 12 through  
13    April 6, 2012;

14    **AND WHEREAS** Missouri will have approximately 377,473 CRP acres expiring in 2012;

15    **AND WHEREAS** research and the scientific community agree that when comparing tall fescue to  
16    native grasses and forbs the native species provide better nesting habitat and structure for  
17    ground nesting wildlife, provide improved water retention reducing chemical and sedimentation  
18    runoff, sequester carbon at a higher rate, is not toxic to other soil organisms, wildlife and livestock  
19    and create superior pollinator habitat critical for the sustainment of agriculture;

20 **AND WHEREAS** CRP offers are scored and ranked using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI)  
21 which currently gives points to cool-season introduced species which do not meet the objectives of  
22 CRP;

23 **AND WHEREAS** FSA National Headquarters eliminated state authority to designate which CRP  
24 cover practices are eligible for Wildlife Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs);

25 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Conservation Federation of Missouri  
26 assembled at the Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, MO, this 26th day of February, 2012  
27 petitions the Secretary of Agriculture, National Farm Service Agency, the Missouri FSA State  
28 Director, the Missouri FSA State Committee and the Missouri NRCS State Conservationist to make  
29 program eligibility and EBI scoring changes and adjustments to insure that: 1. No CRP  
30 reenrollment offers are accepted that contain dominant stands of tall fescue without being converted  
31 to native warm-season grasses and forbs; 2. Eliminate tall fescue as an acceptable introduced grass  
32 under CP1; and 3. FSA National Headquarters reinstate State authority to designate which  
33 conservation practice cover mixes are eligible to receive the wildlife priority zone points when  
34 scoring the EBI.