

§ 1415.12

made for practices applied prior to submitting an application to participate in the program.

(k) Cost share payments will not be made for practices implemented or initiated prior to the approval of a rental agreement or easement acquisition unless a written waiver is granted by USDA at the State level prior to installation of the practice.

§ 1415.12 Modifications to easements and rental agreements.

(a) After an easement has been recorded, no modification will be made to the easement except by mutual agreement by the Chief, NRCS, and the landowner.

(b) Easement modifications may only be made by the Chief, NRCS, after consulting with the Office of the General Counsel. Minor modifications may be made by the NRCS State Conservationist in consultation with Office of the General Counsel. Minor modifications are those that do not affect the substance of the conservation easement deed. Such modifications include, typographical errors, minor changes in legal descriptions as a result of survey or mapping errors, and address changes.

(c) Approved modifications will be made only in an amendment to an easement which is duly prepared and recorded in conformity with standard real estate practices, including requirements for title approval, subordination of liens, and recordation.

(d) The Chief, NRCS, may approve modifications on easements to facilitate the practical administration and management of the enrolled area so long as the modification will not adversely affect the grassland functions and values for which the land was acquired or other terms of the easement.

(e) NRCS State Conservationists may approve modifications for restoration agreements and conservation plans as long as the modifications do not affect the provisions of the easement or rental agreement and meets GRP program objectives.

(f) USDA may approve modifications on rental agreements to facilitate the practical administration and management of the enrolled area so long as the modification will not adversely affect

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the grassland functions and values for which the land was enrolled.

§ 1415.13 Transfer of land.

(a) Any transfer of the property prior to the participant's acceptance into the program shall void the offer of enrollment, unless at the option of USDA at the State level, an offer is extended to the new participant and the new participant agrees to the same easement or rental agreement terms and conditions.

(b) After acreage is accepted in the program, for easements with multiple payments, any remaining easement payments will be made to the original landowner unless USDA receives an assignment of proceeds.

(c) Future annual rental payments will be made to the successor participant.

(d) The new landowner or contract successor is responsible for complying with the terms of the recorded easement or rental agreement and for assuring completion of all measures and practices required by the associated restoration agreement. Eligible cost share payments will be made to the new participant upon presentation that the successor assumed the costs of establishing the practices.

(e) With respect to any and all payments owed to landowners, the United States bears no responsibility for any full payments or partial distributions of funds between the original landowner and the landowner's successor. In the event of a dispute or claim on the distribution of cost share payments, USDA may withhold payments without the accrual of interest pending an agreement or adjudication on the rights to the funds.

(f) The rights granted to the United States in an easement shall apply to any of its agents or assigns. All obligations of the landowner under the GRP conservation easement deed also binds the landowner's heirs, successors, agents, assigns, lessees, and any other person claiming under them.

(g) Rental agreements may be transferred to another landowner, operator or tenant that acquires an interest in the land enrolled in GRP. The successor must be determined by USDA to be eligible to participate in GRP and