

Grazing on CRP Lands: Experiences and Challenges



Forum on Grazing on Public and
Privately Managed Non-Pasture
Grasslands

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Keri Jacobs
Assistant Professor
kljacobs@iastate.edu
515-294-6780

Conservation Reserve Program Basics

- Authorized in the 1985 Food Security Act and amended/reauthorized in subsequent farm bill
- Objectives include reduced soil, wind and water erosion, improvement of wildlife habitat and populations
- Landowners enter into contract to retire **previously productive** land from production, 10-15 year contracts
- Largest federal (USDA) private land retirement program
 - Approximately 31.4 million acres; \$1.8 billion in annual payments, cost-sharing, incentives, maintenance
 - Iowa claims 5.35% of CRP acres (1.68 million acres), 12.5% of annual payments (\$214 million annually)

Conservation Reserve Program Basics

- Enrollment achieved through two signup types
 - **General** – competitive enrollment, based on Environmental Benefits Index ranking, **whole-field practices**
 - Continuous – noncompetitive, partial-field practices
- Landowners receive annual rental payments, cost-share assistance, maintenance and other incentives
- Per-acre annual rental payments are capped at a maximum soil rental rate based on soil types, land productivity, other parcel characteristics
 - National average: \$46 / acre
 - Iowa average: \$108.28 / acre

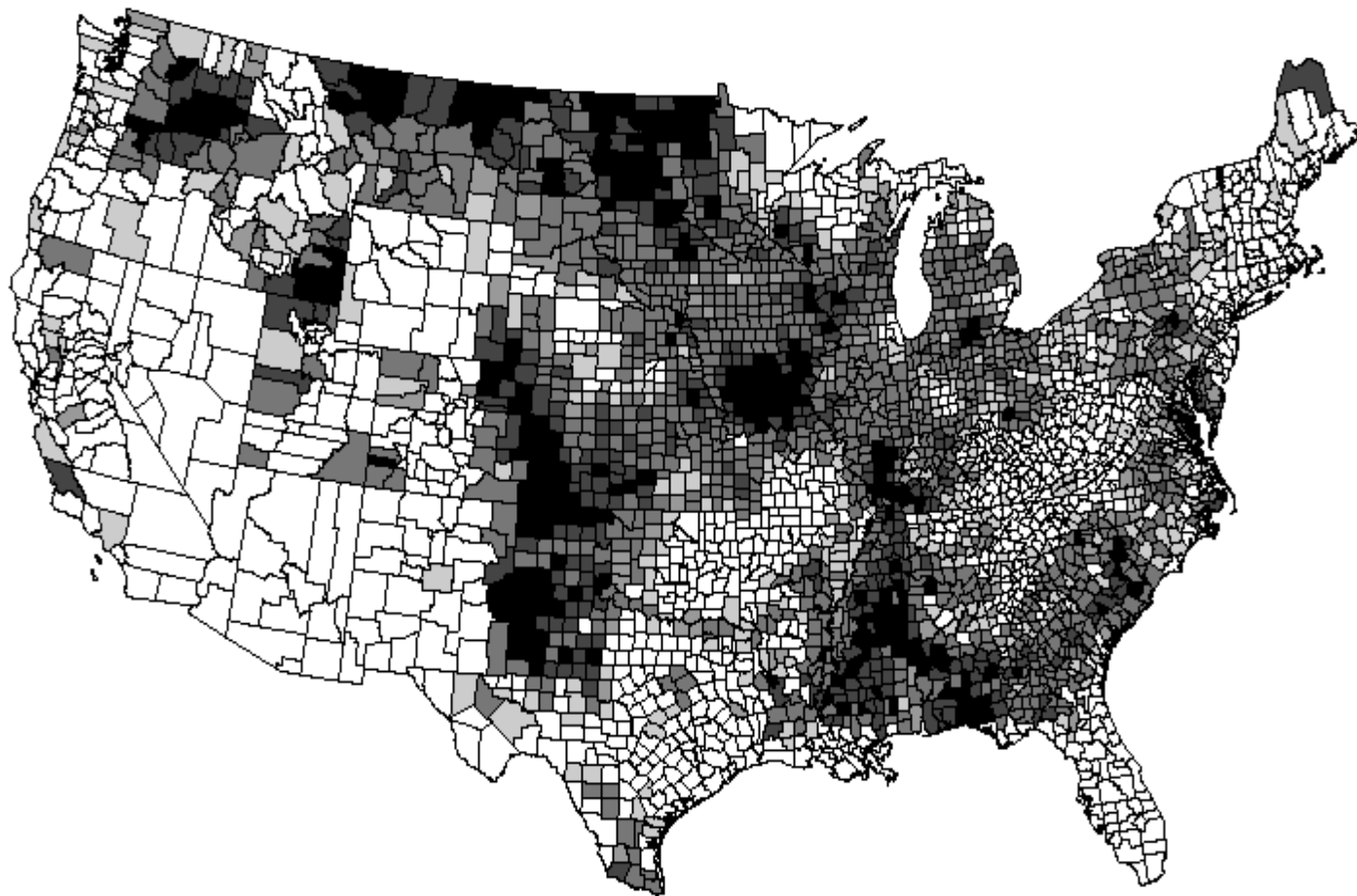
General Signup EBI Factors and Sub Factors

N-Factors	Description	Signup						
		15	16	18	20	26	29	33
N1	Wildlife Habitat Benefits	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N2	Water Quality Benefits	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N3	On-Farm Benefits (Erodibility)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N4	Long-Term (Enduring) Benefits	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
N5	Air Quality Benefits	25	35	35	35	45	45	45
N6	Conservation Priority Area (CPA)	25	25	25	25	-	-	-
N7	Cost	200	150	150	150	150	150	150
EBI Cut-off Values for Acceptance		259	247	245	246	269	248	242

Iowa's EBI strength comes from its non-cost EBI components due to high soil rental rates, which are penalized in the EBI

CRP Acreage as a Fraction of Farmland

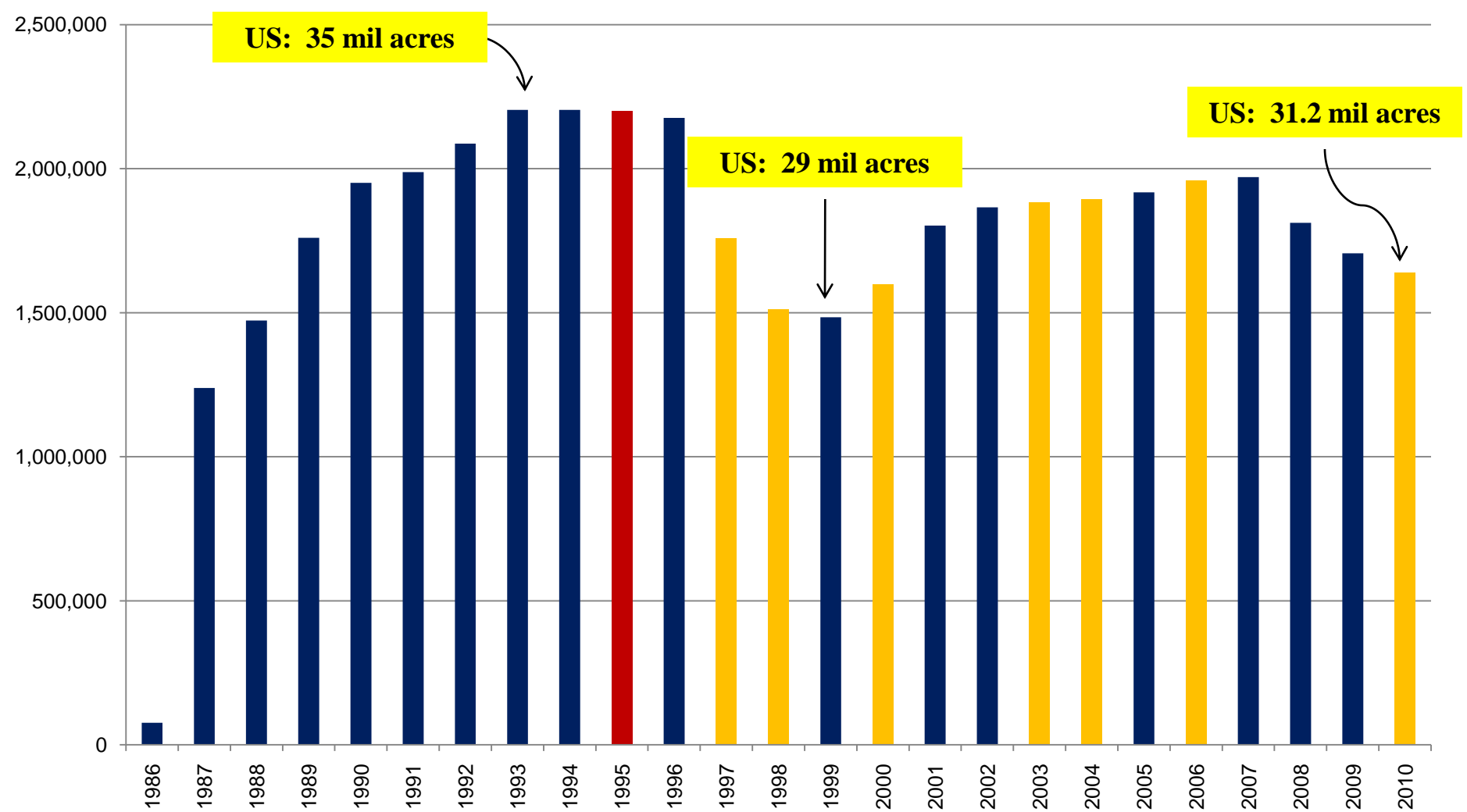
County Level Results



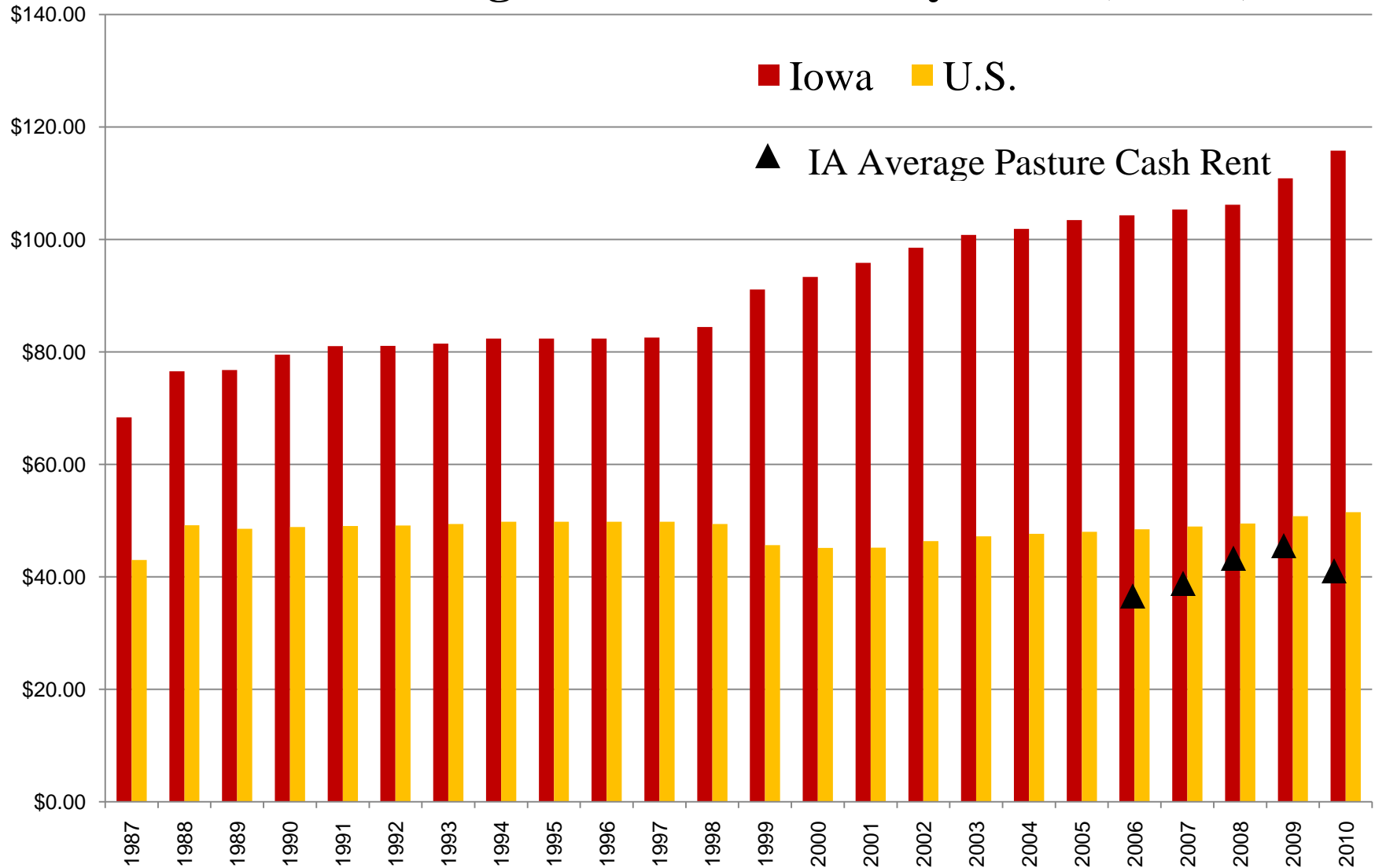
PROPCRP

0 to .25%	.25% to .75%	.75% to 1%
1% to 5%	5% to 10%	10% to 36%

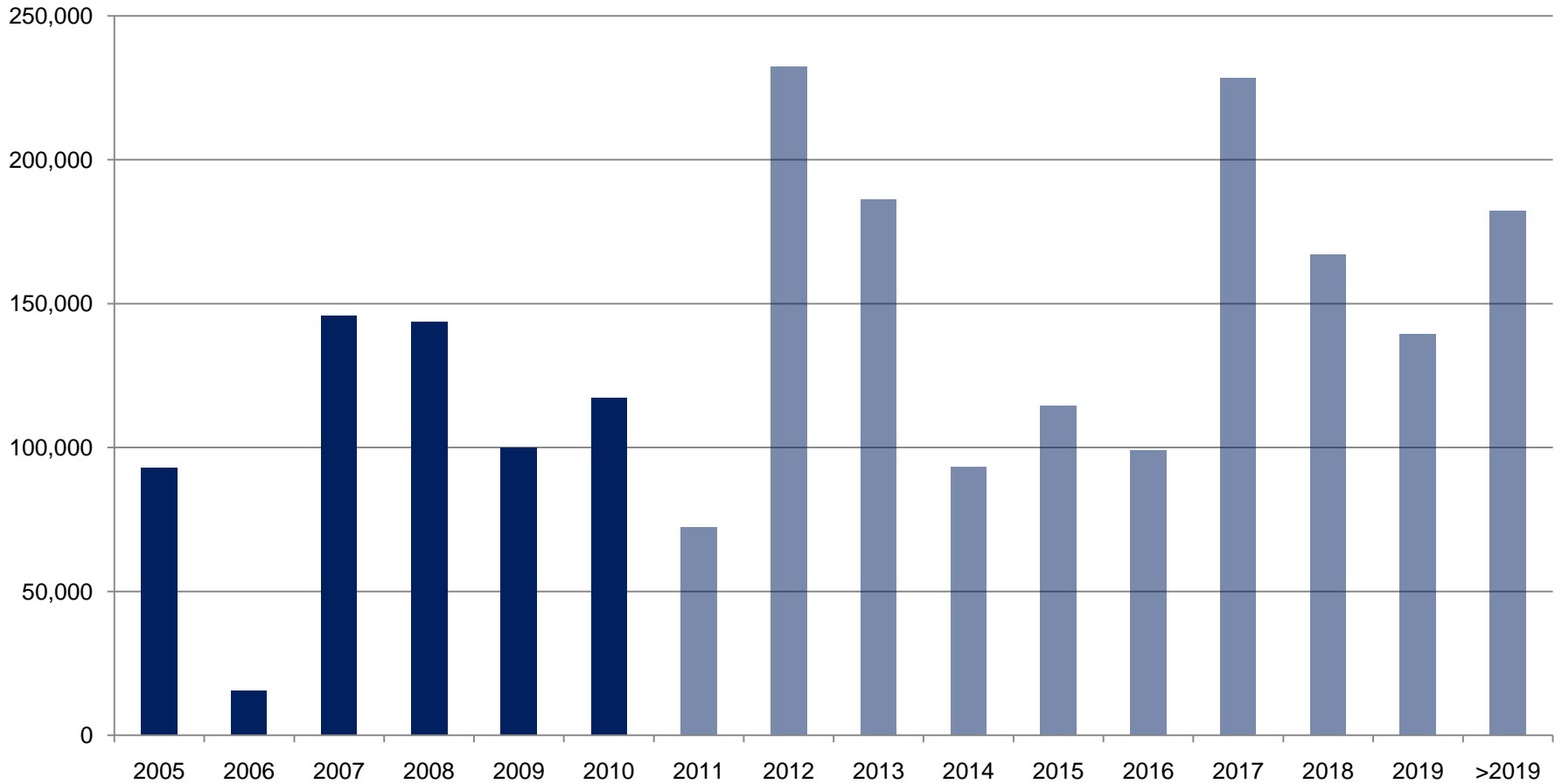
Cumulative CRP Acres in Iowa



Iowa: Average Annual Rental Payments (\$/acre)



Expiring CRP Acres in IA



Grazing Procedures

Concern is primary nesting season for wildlife

- Established jointly by state FSA and NRCS technical committees

Two grazing authorizations

- **Managed** grazing: allowed to improve the performance of the cover established by landowners
- **Emergency** grazing: relief to livestock producers in the event of certain natural disasters

Managed Grazing

- Not more frequently than 1 out of every 3 years
- Location specific – some areas may not be allowed managed grazing
- Ineligible if emergency grazing occurred in any of previous two years
- Authorized for a single period of 120 days or two periods, 60 days each.
- Landowner must file request with local FSA office

Emergency Grazing

1. Authorization provided by National FSA

- Eligibility determined on a county-by-county basis
- Requires at least a 40% loss in pasture production **and**
 - **drought** characterized by at least 40% reduction in precipitation in previous 4 months,
 - OR
 - **excessive precipitation** – 140% greater than normal during previous 4 months
- Acreage for grazing restricted to county or portion of county, based on prevailing conditions

Emergency Grazing

2. Authorization provided by State FSA

- County FSA offices may request emergency grazing for a county (or portion of) based on Drought Monitor (D3, D4)
- Up to 120 days in a single period (consecutive)

Restrictions to Grazing

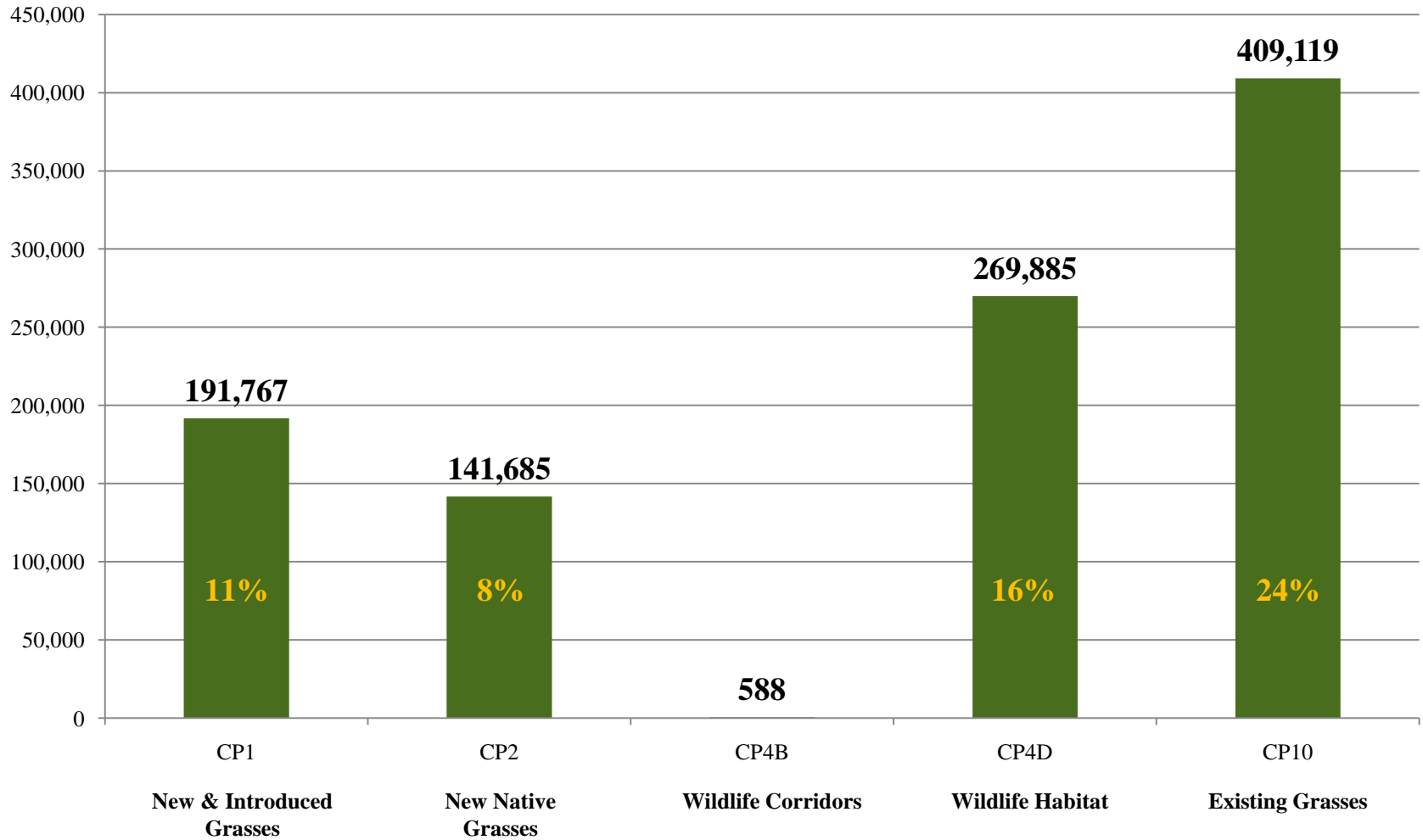
- Payment reductions required
 - 25% for managed grazing
 - 10% for emergency grazing
- Request filed with county FSA office
- Modified conservation plan must be developed with the NRCS before grazing can occur
 - Must address local wildlife needs and concerns
 - Must maintain vegetative cover, minimize soil erosion, and protect water and wildlife habitat quality

Restrictions to Grazing

Conservation Practices (CPs) eligible for grazing

- **CP1** – New introduced grasses and legumes (7% of coverage nationally)
- **CP2** – New native grasses (20% of coverage nationally)
- **CP4B** – Wildlife corridors (< .1% of coverage nationally)
- **CP4D** – Wildlife habitat (3.5% of coverage nationally)
- **CP10** – Existing grasses (36% coverage nationally)
- **CP18B and CP18C** – Salinity reducing vegetation; continuous signup practice (< 1% coverage nationally)

Acreage by CP in Iowa



Restrictions to Grazing

In addition to CP restrictions...

- Not allowed on useful life easements
- Not on land within 100 feet of stream or permanent water body

Emergency Grazing Allowances

- 2006 – emergency haying & grazing in 30 states due to drought (started in OK & TX due to wildfires)
- 2007 – emergency grazing on large scale (nationally)
- 2008 – USDA announces authorization of 24 millions acres of CRP to be used for livestock feed but action was blocked by National Wildlife Federation lawsuit.
- Local grazing allowances occur yearly (flooding in IA, for example)

Direction of Program Going Forward

- 2008 farm bill language weighted toward “**working land**” conservation, movement away from land retirement
- Budget issues surrounding next farm bill likely to diminish support for a CRP that reduces production

Thank you for your time!

Questions?

kljacobs@iastate.edu

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