Dan Steinkruger, Acting State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Nebraska, announced that signup for the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program began April 27.

ACRE is a provision of the 2008 Farm Bill that provides a revenue, price and/or yield, safety net compared to the Counter-Cyclical payments which provides a price only safety net.

"The ACRE program is an innovative alternative to the traditional farm safety net," Steinkruger said. "This new option presents an opportunity for producers to review both programs and decide which one will work best for their operation," he said.

Producers have until Aug. 14, 2009 to make their decision for the 2009 crop. USDA will not accept any late-filed elections. Steinkruger encouraged farmers and landowners to "make plans to review their ACRE options as soon as possible to properly evaluate their opportunity."

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

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

The ACRE program was created in the 2008 Farm Bill to give producers an option to be eligible for revenue 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.

To elect ACRE for a farm, all producers on a farm must sign 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 visit the Farm Service Agency county office, or visit http://www.fsa.usda.gov.