

Land Removed from Production

Some land is removed from production in compliance with government programs. Set-aside acres include land removed under annual Federal commodity acreage adjustment programs. Land removed under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been diverted from production through 10- to 15-year contracts (Young and Shields, 1996, p. 17). Other State and Federal programs remove much less land. Land removed from production totaled 60 million acres (table 4).

Although fewer farms participated in the CRP than in set-aside programs, average CRP acres per reporting farm were higher. The CRP accounted for 60 percent of the total cropland removed, and most of the rest of the removed acres were in set-aside programs. About

30 percent of all idled land in government programs was located in the Northern Plains (app. table 9).

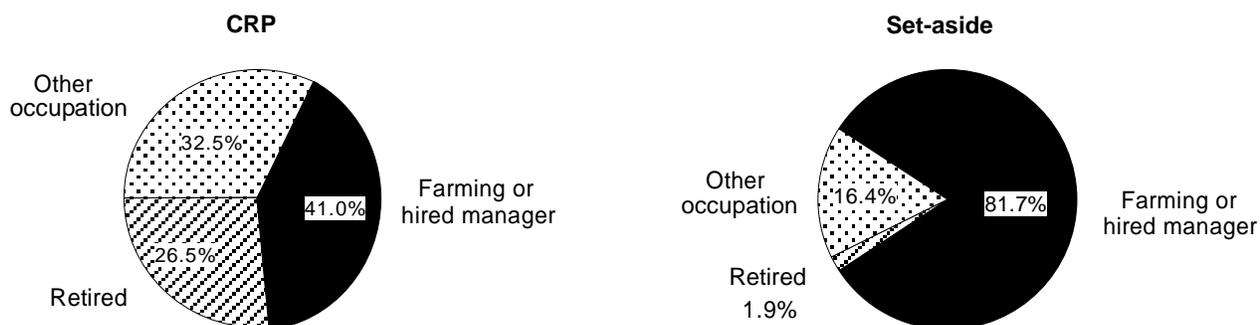
About 50 percent of set-aside acres were in cash grain farms. These farms grew crops (feed grains, wheat, and rice) targeted by set-aside programs. Another 25 percent of set-aside acres were in beef, hog, and sheep farms, which often raise targeted feed grains as feed for their livestock.

Farms participating in the set-aside programs were more likely to have operators reporting farming or hired manager as their major occupation (fig. 10). Eighty-two percent of the farms participating in set-aside programs had an operator whose major occupation was farming or hired manager. In contrast, only 41 percent of farms participating in the CRP program were run by an operator with those major occupations.

Figure 10

Farms participating in the set-aside and Conservation Reserve Programs, by major occupation of operator, 1993

Farms with operators whose occupation was farming or hired manager accounted for a larger share of participants in the set-aside program



Source: Economic Research Service, compiled from the 1993 Farm Costs and Returns Survey.