**Section 150.20 Agricultural Management Leases**

a) Agricultural management leases are for a period of:

1) not more than 15 years, if the land is to be enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Program; or

2) not more than four years for all other agricultural management leases.

b) Agricultural management leases shall be let by sealed competitive bids, except these leases may be negotiated under any of the following conditions:

1) when land has been recently purchased with an agreement that the previous owner will farm the property for the next one to two years (as part of the land transaction);

2) when the tract is less than 50 acres or completely surrounded by other private land;

3) when property acquired by lease or purchase is acquired late in the season;

4) when crops are already planted by a previous owner or tenant; or

5) when the Department of Natural Resources purchases less than fee simple interest in a property for development purposes.

c) Notices of the available agricultural management leases shall be placed in a local newspaper prior to a sealed competitive bid letting.

d) A public informational meeting shall be held at the site of the available agricultural management lease prior to the bid letting.

e) The bids shall be opened at a public bid opening.

f) The best qualified highest bidder shall be given the right to enter into an agricultural management lease. Factors taken into consideration in determining a qualified bidder shall include, but not be limited to, criteria contained in Section 150.50.

g) If no bids are placed or if no qualified bidders place bids, a negotiated lease with a qualified lessee may be sought.

h) At the end of an agricultural management lease period, the lease may be renegotiated with the present leaseholder if the leaseholder has not violated lease covenants or has quickly corrected such violations after notification by the Farm Lease Program Administrator. In such a case, no competitive bidding on the agricultural management lease will be offered.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 825, effective December 29, 2015)