



At a Glance:

Conservation Stewardship Program

May 2008

Overview

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by:

- Undertaking additional conservation activities; and
- Improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

CSP is available on Tribal and private agricultural lands in all 50 States and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands Areas. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced, or geographic location. CSP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Legislative Changes

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) replaces the Conservation Security Program with the new Conservation Stewardship Program for fiscal years 2009 through 2017.

To be eligible to participate in CSP, applicants must:

- Demonstrate that they are meeting the stewardship threshold for at least one resource concern; and
- Address at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the conservation stewardship contract.

The program will enroll an additional 12,769,000 acres for each fiscal year. Acreage will be allocated based primarily on each State's or Area's proportion of eligible acres to the total number of all eligible acres.

In addition to private agricultural lands, up to 10 percent of the enrolled acreage may be in nonindustrial private forest land.

State Conservationists and Area Directors will rank and select applications based on national, State, and local criteria. Contracts will cover the entire agricultural operation and will be for 5 years.

CSP payments will compensate producers for:

- Installing and adopting additional conservation activities;
- Improving, maintaining, and managing conservation activities in place at the time the contract offer is accepted by the Secretary;
- Adopting resource-conserving crop rotations to achieve beneficial crop rotations;
- Engaging in activities related to on-farm conservation research and demonstration activities, and pilot testing of new technologies or innovative conservation practices.

CSP payments to an individual or legal entity may not exceed \$200,000 for all contracts entered into during any 5-year period.

The 2008 Farm Bill prohibits new contracts under the Conservation Security Program (as authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill) after September 30, 2008, and provides for funding for all current contracts.

More Information

For more information and updates about CSP and other Farm Bill topics, please visit your local conservation district — listed on the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) web site at www.macd.org — the Michigan Natural Resources Conservation Service web site www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/ and/or the U.S. Department of Agriculture web site at www.usda.gov/farmbill.

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

Michigan's 79 Conservation Districts are elected units of government authorized by state law. Most are organized along county boundaries. Each Conservation District is governed by a five member, locally elected board of directors who act as a locally controlled resource management agency. The District is the only entity in Michigan accountable to the landowners within its jurisdiction and responsible to provide services and implement programs that meet the needs of private landowners, the community, and its natural resources.