

# NRCS NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Announces Sign-Up Period for Conservation Stewardship Program**

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**St. Paul, MN, December 13, 2011-** USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced that the cut-off date to have an application submitted for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is January 13, 2012. Producers interested in CSP should submit applications to their local NRCS office by the deadline so that their applications can be considered during the first ranking period of 2012.

"CSP is one of our most popular conservation programs, and we expect to receive many applications," NRCS State Conservationist Don Baloun said. "I encourage all farmers and ranchers who are interested in applying to contact their local NRCS office as soon as possible so they can meet the deadline."

CSP is offered in all 50 states, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancements and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help potential applicants determine if CSP is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local NRCS offices and on the [CSP Web page](#).

As part of the CSP application process, applicants will work with NRCS field personnel to complete the resource inventory using a Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT). The CMT determines the conservation performance for existing and new conservation activities. The applicant's conservation performance will be used to determine eligibility, ranking and payments.

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During the first three sign-ups in 2010 and 2011, over 2,300 Minnesota applicants enrolled in CSP, putting additional conservation on over 1.4 million acres in Minnesota, to improve water and soil quality, enhance wildlife habitat and address the effects of climate change.

Visit the NRCS [National Web site](#), and connect with an NRCS office [near you](#).

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