



Massachusetts State Office

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NRCS extends sign-up period for Conservation Stewardship Program

Local farmers and forestland owners may apply through January 7, 2011

AMHERST, Mass., Nov. 15, 2010 – The United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has extended the ranking period for farmer and forestland owner applications to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The cut-off date is now January 7, 2011.

Massachusetts agricultural producers and forestland owners are encouraged to apply for CSP. The program, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and nonindustrial private forestland.

“We’re extending the deadline for applications to CSP to provide Bay State farmers and forestland owners more time to complete their applications,” said Christine Clarke, NRCS State Conservationist for Massachusetts. “Hopefully this will allow even more landowners to participate in this program.”

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help landowners 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 or online at www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html.

To sign up for CSP, farmers should call or visit their local USDA Service Center. USDA Service Center locations are listed on-line at offices.usda.gov or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

CSP is offered in all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups with announced cut-off dates for ranking periods. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancement and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is celebrating its 75th year of helping people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. NRCS has seven Massachusetts field offices – in Greenfield, Hadley, Holden, Hyannis, Pittsfield, Westford, and West Wareham – that work with local conservation districts and other partners to serve farmers and landowners throughout the commonwealth.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: If you would like to include local contact information, please use the office below that serves your area.

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