



**G**ary Ross, along with New Mexico's other CSP recipients, was honored by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service as the state's 2005 Conservation Security Program participants at a ceremonial contract signing in Fort Sumner, August 18, 2005.

CSP is a voluntary program that rewards landowners for their conservation stewardship and improvements they've made to soil, water, air, energy, plant, and animal life. It identifies the best of the best, and showcases New Mexico's finest farms and ranches.

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# Doing all the ... Right Things



**Conservation Planning  
SMARTER FARMERS  
WISER RANCHERS**

### WHAT IT TAKES

It takes record keeping to make those wise decisions during both good years and bad. Records that help farmers include:

#### Crop Rotations

- Crop sequences on each field for full rotation period
- (At least two years for a single crop rotation)

#### Tillage Records

- Tillage equipment used
- Tillage dates
- Planting Dates
- Harvest Dates
- Grazing dates and details for numbers and kinds for animals (gleaning of crop residues or grazing of cover crops)

#### Irrigation Records

- System details (drip, flood, etc.)
- Moisture monitoring methods
- Application dates and rates

#### Soil Testing

- Soil test records
- Detailed application records of kind and rate and date of nutrients
- Pesticide applications, kind, dates, rates, scouting prior to application



For information about conservation planning and other USDA programs contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office nearest you.

[www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov)

When Gary Ross chose to focus on production of milo seed he took steps to build one of New Mexico's finest farms and ranches. His operation in Roosevelt, Curry and DeBaca counties includes milo and wheat rotation, alfalfa and wheat rotation, cattle, and some Conservation Reserve Program land.

His main focus is the milo seed production. He alternates rows of male and female plants, planting male plants two rows at a time 10 days apart for the best pollination of the crop. He applies two tons of compost in the spring before planting the milo, takes samples of the compost to determine nutrient value, and finishes off the nutrient recommendations with commercial fertilizers according to soil tests and plant needs. By sampling each well he monitors salts and nutrients in the water.

It is extremely important to note that Ross takes multiple soil samples on each field each year to get a nutrient recommendation.

After the milo is harvested, there is no cultivation of any kind until the next fall when he runs a sweep plow with pickers and harrows twice. He then broadcasts wheat seed and fertilizer together and harrows. During the winter he lightly grazes the wheat and milo stubble, and next spring terminates the wheat and plants directly into the standing wheat stubble with milo again.

His irrigation systems are LESA and LEPA center pivots where he uses the checkbook method of irrigation. He applies one to two inches of water per application to meet crop needs.