

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) West Virginia 2010

May, 2010

Stewardship has Rewards

A Harrison County Operator is Enthusiastic about CSP

CSP encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and non-industrial private forest land.

“CSP has provided Mr. Law an incentive to undertake additional conservation activities on his operation and maintain previously applied conservation practices.”

Jeff Griffith
District Conservationist

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Richard Law

Richard Law is a Harrison County farm operator who is participating in West Virginia's CSP program

Richard Law is recognized by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a stewardship leader by being one of West Virginia's first Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) participants. CSP is a voluntary program that encourages producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt new ones on their farm and non-industrial forestland operations. The program is for those who go the extra mile with conservation and sustainable practices—whether they've accomplished it on their own or through USDA and NRCS programs.

Authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, CSP offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship.

Richard Law is the operator of a 125 acre farm near Lost Creek in Southern Harrison County. After Richard obtained a long term lease of the abandoned farm in 2003, he requested technical assistance from USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the West Fork Conservation District. A conservation plan and grassland plan was developed for his farm. The farm consists of 42 acres of pasture, five acres of hayland, and 78 acres of forestland.

Richard works closely with his father, Edison Law, Jr., who owns the adjoining farm. Livestock are rotated under a prescribed grazing plan between farms to optimize use of pasture and resources. The farm that Richard operates was also recognized in conjunction with his father's farm as the 2006 West Virginia State Conservation Farm of the Year.



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“I wanted to keep the conservation program on the farm going, CSP is an incentive for me to maintain what was already installed and to apply other practices,” said Law. “CSP will provide me an incentive to monitor grazing areas and compare from year to year. I will be evaluating grass legume composition, weed composition, and estimate forage yield. This information will allow me to make improved management decisions based on the data I collect.”

In 2004, Richard participated in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In 2005, Richard participated in the Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA). Conservation practices applied include: nutrient management, prescribed grazing, four spring developments, pipeline, three water troughs, woodland exclusion fencing, poultry litter application, and extended fall/winter grazing by stockpiling forages. Both contracts have been fully

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implemented. In 2009, the farm was enrolled in CSP.

Like Law, farmers who maintained a conservation legacy on their farm over the years or those who have changed their operation over the last few years to include more conservation management strategies, may be rewarded through CSP. CSP pays to maintain those successful practices AND it helps add even more solutions that protect soil, water, and related natural resources on the land.

“CSP has provided Law an incentive to undertake additional conservation activities on his operation and maintain previously applied conservation practices,” said Jeff Griffith, Mount Clare Service Center, District Conservationist. “CSP provides opportunities not only for agricultural land but for non-industrial private forest land as well.”

“Written records of agricultural and

forestry activities are important for participation in CSP. The applicant must provide NRCS staff, upon request, appropriate written records documenting applied conservation activities and production systems,” said Griffith. “Record keeping is a must in any type business and it fits right in with the CSP program,” added Law.

Potential applicants are encouraged to use the CSP self-screening checklist to determine if the program is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations, and potential payments. It is available from local USDA–Natural Resources Conservation Service offices or on the NRCS Web site at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html.



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