Conservation Stewardship Program
Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview
The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP pays participants for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Benefits
CSP addresses various resource concerns including soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, plant resources, and animal resources as well as energy.

How It Works
CSP provides two possible types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Who is Eligible?
Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Indian tribes that meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns when they apply. They must also agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Producers must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract.

Eligible lands include private and tribal agricultural lands, cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial private forest land. CSP is available to all producers, regardless of operation size or type of crops produced, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas.

What’s New in the 2018 Farm Bill
Increases payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities.

Extends contracts to facilitate renewal under new program authority.

Authorizes specified annual funding levels.

Provides specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.

Adds new CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative.

More Information
For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill or farmers.gov.

Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

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