United States Department of Agriculture

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, Indian tribes or Alaska Native organizations 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.

New CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative

Provides financial assistance to conserve grasslands through a single opportunity to enroll in a 5-year contract. Eligible lands are limited to cropland for which base acres have been maintained under FSA's ARC/PLC and were planted to grass or pasture, including idle or fallow, during a specific period. Enrolled acreage must be managed consistently with a grassland conservation plan.

How to Apply

Apply at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at farmers.gov/service-locator. Applications are accepted at any time.

Payments are made soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year.

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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