United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Stewardship Program

for Crop Growers

Have you ever looked across your land and thought about some operational management goals you would like to take to the next level? Maybe we can help.

No one knows more about your land than you do, and no one knows more about conservation than we do. Together we can develop a plan tailored to your operation and your goals to help you increase productivity and protect the value of your land.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers an opportunity for crop growers to enhance their agricultural operations while adopting conservation activities that can reduce energy use, improve soil health, and improve water quality. CSP can help you plan and implement conservation practices and enhancements that address natural resource concerns on your operation.

What's New?

Crop growers continue to benefit from all the CSP has to offer. There are a number of enhancements for crop production. Examples of enhancement options available to crop growers include cover crops to improve soil health and productivity, buffers to enhance water quality and water management activities to improve water efficiency.

The new CSP provides adaptive management options to better respond to market and weather conditions, allowing participants to choose enhancements, or bundles of enhancements, that best fit their unique circumstances.

Is CSP for You?

CSP helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve water efficiency, increase crop yields, or develop wildlife habitat, we can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. We can help you schedule timely planting of cover crops, develop a residue management plan to improve soil health, implement no-till to reduce erosion or manage riparian areas in a way that benefits wildlife habitat. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals. CSP contracts are for five years, with the option to renew for an additional five years.

Types of Assistance

NRCS provides free technical assistance to agricultural producers. To participate in CSP and receive financial assistance, producers must control or own the land and be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements, and have current farm records with USDA Farm Service Agency. Learn more at **www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill**.

The Next Step

To learn more about CSP opportunities, producers should contact their local USDA service center and set up an appointment with NRCS staff. A Local Service Center Directory is available online at www.nrcs.usda.gov, then click "Contact Us." You can also visit our CSP page online at **www.nrcs.usda.gov/CSP**.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

ak.nrcs.usda.gov

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CSP Enhancements to assist Crop Growers

(This is not an exhaustive list.)

Crops (including agro-forestry), Soil & Water

- Conservation Cover
- Cover Crops
- Residue and Tillage Management
- Reduced Till
- Irrigation Water Management
- Mulching
- Nutrient Management
- Riparian Buffer
- Filter Strip
- Forage and Biomass Planting

Pest Management

- Conservation Cover
- Cover Crops
- Crop Rotation
- Pollinator Habitat Development
- Integrated Pest Management
- Upland Habitat Management

Natural Resources, Biodiversity & Buffers

- Conservation Cover
- Critical Area Planting
- Field Border
- Hedgerow Planting
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife

- Monarch Butterfly Habitat
- Wildlife Corridors
- Leave Standing Grain Crops to Benefit Wildlife
- Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Habitat Development
- Water Management for Wildlife Habitat

FAQ frequently asked questions

How can I find out if I am eligible?

The best way to determine eligibility is to contact your local field office. You must meet Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements and have a Farm Tract Number with FSA. Land already enrolled in some USDA Farm Bill programs, such as CRP and some easement programs, may not be eligible.

Is there a minimum number of acres needed to be enrolled?

No, but entire operation must be enrolled.

Is there a minimum contract payment?

Yes, $1,500 annually.

What are "resource concerns?"

NRCS conservation specialists conduct resource inventories on agricultural land to evaluate natural resources including soil, water, air, plant, and animal resource bases to determine their condition. If there is a cause or threat to that resource, that can result in what we refer to as a resource concern. Examples of resource concerns are erosion, degraded water quality, and plant health.

What are "enhancements?"

Enhancements are management activities that go above and beyond the minimum practice requirements helping the producer achieve a higher level of conservation.

What are "bundles?"

Bundles are suites of conservation enhancements designed to address multiple resource concerns. Bundle options are offered at a higher payment rate.

Do I have options to pick the enhancements that are best suited for my operation?

Yes. The variety of CSP practices that are offered give you a lot of freedom to select enhancements that help you meet your management goals.

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