



CSP 2009

MOSES ORGANIC FACT SHEET

## The New Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

**The new 2009 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** replaces the old Conservation Security Program (CSP) covered in the previous farm bill. Both CSPs tie payments to conservation activities done by farmers on their working lands. The new CSP also emphasizes and provides payments for new conservation activities. All CSP contracts are now for 5 years, with a potential renewal option for an additional 5 years. The old CSP was only open to farmers in targeted watershed areas around the country and enrolled approximately 20 million acres in total. The new CSP program allows 12.8 million acres nationally to be enrolled for each of the five years of this current program and is open to all farms having a "farm record number" with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). If your farm has participated in any commodity payment programs, or the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), you would meet this requirement. If you are not listed with the FSA, you will need to make an appointment to create a farm record, bringing proof of ownership (deed) or lease of the land, location maps outlining crop fields and other land uses as they are currently managed and any business related legal papers (article of incorporation, trusts etc).

Your adjusted gross income from farming must be less than \$750,000 in order to receive CSP payments. Your farm must also be in compliance with highly erodible and wetland conservation provisions, your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office can help you understand this requirement. All acreage under your management must be included in your farm record, both owned and rented.

### How and When to Apply for CSP

As with many NRCS programs, there is a continuous signup, with periodic deadlines where farm-

ers who have signed up before that date have their applications ranked against others in that same timeframe. The two upcoming deadlines for CSP are September 30, 2009 and mid January 2010. CSP is available to farmers or ranchers who have both cropland (which includes, row crops, pasture, forages and vegetables) and/or private (non-industrial) forestland on their property. 10% of the funds will be given to forestland owners nationwide who have demonstrated conservation with their timber management. The first payment for both the September and January ranking periods will be dispersed in October of 2010.

To apply, the producer must first establish eligibility with FSA, then sign a program application at the NRCS office. Applicants then make an appointment to work with their local NRCS person to complete the Conservation Measurement Tool, which describes and documents your current and future conservation activities. The data developed in the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) is used by the NRCS to rank applications and develop stewardship plans and contracts. In addition to this online questionnaire based CMT, there will be a farm visit by local NRCS personnel to verify the CMT information for the highest ranking offers and review documentation for existing conservation practices. Farmers, who demonstrate good current conservation on their farm as well as willingness to perform additional conservation measures, should consider applying for the program.

### Who Can Benefit from CSP

The new CSP will reward farmers who have a high degree of conservation at the time of application and who intend to implement new activities that result in positive conservation results. In addition, current and new conservation measures

that meet the state's priority concerns will receive more points in the ranking with recognition as well for those conservation activities that are not part of the state's specific priorities. The expected environmental benefits, the costs incurred by the farmer to plan, install and maintain the conservation activities as well as the income foregone as a result of the conservation activity are all part of the Conservation Measurement Tool. The CMT will determine the ranking of the application and the level of payment the farmer could receive under this program.

### **Conservation Activities Encouraged Under CSP**

In Wisconsin, the main priority concerns are soil erosion, water quality, protection of plants and animals, as well as conservation that leads to less reliance on nonrenewable energy sources. There are areas in the state, called "ranking pools", where the farmers in these pools will be ranked against others only within their pool. The amount of dollars or approved acres for each ranking pool will limit the number of CSP contracts that can be accepted. The cap for payment is \$40,000 per year, or \$200,000 for the five year period. It is estimated payments will average \$18 per acre nationwide, but this will vary by region, land use and the individual level of existing and planned stewardship.

Examples of conservation activities include use of cover crops over the winter to prevent soil and water erosion, or a crop rotation that includes numerous years of a sod crop such as hay or pasture. These items would meet Wisconsin's priority concerns. If a producer decides to also put in native pollinator habitat, this is beyond the priority concern for the state, but could still receive some points in the Conservation Measurement Tool. Changing cropland to perennial pollinator habitat would be an example where the producer would forego income in favor of a conservation activity. There are opportunities for livestock producers as well, with good manure and nutrient management rewarded as well as protection of natural resources by controlled grazing and stream bank protection. Forest land owners who are participating in timber stand improvement or regenerating old windbreaks and shelterbelts may also find CSP a beneficial program to aid them in their conservation efforts.

### **Additional CSP Resources**

#### **Natural Resources Conservation Service:**

*General Info:* [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new\\_csp/csp.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html)

*Minnesota Info:* <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/>

*Iowa Info:* <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp2009.html>

*Illinois Info:* <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/index.html> or call Paige Buck, Public Information Officer at 217-353-6606.

*Wisconsin Info:* <http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/cstp.html>

#### **A Farmers Guide to CSP:**

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

<http://sacdev.org/publications/grassrootsguide/conservation-environment/conservation-stewardship-program/>

#### **Center for Rural Affairs**

<http://www.cfra.org/csp-ten-steps>  
or call (402) 687-2100 and ask for the Farm Bill Helpline.

#### **ATTRA**

<http://attra.ncat.org/csp/>  
or call 800-346-9140

#### **The Land Stewardship Project**

<http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/pdf/CSP10.pdf>

#### **Organic Farming Research Foundation**

[http://ofrf.org/policy/federal\\_legislation/farm\\_bill\\_implementation/csp\\_resource\\_page.html](http://ofrf.org/policy/federal_legislation/farm_bill_implementation/csp_resource_page.html)

#### **Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES)**

<http://www.mosesorganic.org>, call 715-778-5775 or email [jeff@mosesorganic.org](mailto:jeff@mosesorganic.org)

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Visit [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org) for more resources and tools, including our Organic Resource Directory and the Organic Broadcaster Newspaper. Plan to attend our annual Organic Farming Conference in February. To find upcoming events including MOSES trainings and field days visit our web calendar at: [www.mosesorganic.org/events.html](http://www.mosesorganic.org/events.html)

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