



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Extends Sign-Up Period for Conservation Stewardship Program**

WASHINGTON, January 13, 2011-- USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced the ranking period cut-off date for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has been extended to January 21, 2011. Producers interested in CSP should submit applications to their local NRCS Office by the deadline so that their applications can be considered during the first ranking period of 2011.

"CSP benefits rural communities across the nation by protecting and preserving critical natural resources," said NRCS Chief Dave White. "We encourage those producers who have already made conservation a priority to apply and work with us to expand the scale of conservation on their land."

CSP is offered in all 50 states, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancements and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

Producers are encouraged to apply for CSP throughout the year to be considered for current and future application ranking periods. Those producers who apply by Jan. 21, 2011, may be eligible for current available funding. The program, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and nonindustrial forestland.

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help producers determine if CSP is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contracts obligations and potential payments. It is available from local NRCS offices or online at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new\\_CSP/CSP.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_CSP/CSP.html).

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