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USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE ANNOUNCES SIGN-UP PERIOD For Conservation Stewardship Program

WASHINGTON, December 9, 2011 – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced that the ranking period cut-off date for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is January 13, 2012. 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 2012.

“CSP is one of our most popular conservation programs, and we expect to receive many applications,” NRCS Chief Dave White said. “I encourage all farmers and ranchers who are interested in applying to contact their local NRCS office as soon as possible so they can meet the deadline.”

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. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

A CSP self-screening checklist is available to help potential applicants determine if CSP is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local NRCS offices and on the [CSP Web page](#).

As part of the CSP application process, applicants will work with NRCS field personnel to complete the resource inventory using a Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT). The CMT determines the conservation performance for existing and new conservation activities. The applicant’s conservation performance will be used to determine eligibility, ranking and payments.

In 2010 alone, nearly 21,000 applicants enrolled in CSP, putting additional conservation on 25.2 million acres, about the size of the state of Kentucky, to improve water and soil quality, enhance wildlife habitat and address the effects of climate change.

Visit the NRCS [National Web site](#), and connect with an NRCS office [near you](#).

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