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## Conservation Security Program Activities Announced

INDIANAPOLIS, August 8, 2007 – Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced yesterday the release of additional funding for Conservation Security Program (CSP) implementation.

"CSP has been a successful conservation program in Indiana since its conception in 2004, and has allowed us the opportunity to recognize and reward our true conservation leaders," said State Conservationist Jane Hardisty of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. "The additional dollars will assist us with training and in updating conservation planning tools so we can continue to help farmers with CSP contracts."

Since 2004, seven Indiana watersheds have been selected for eligibility in CSP. NRCS has provided about \$24 million for 659 contracts with Hoosier farmers who exemplify stewardship of the land.

Nationwide, funds will be made available for both the completion of payments on existing CSP contracts as well as to better prepare NRCS for future program signups. Specifically, \$35 million has been made available to complete payments to producers who received only partial funding for their fiscal year 2007 payments.

In addition, \$2.93 million is being made available to help Natural Resources Conservation Service field staff prepare through training and updating of planning tools for a future program signup in the 51 watersheds previously announced during 2007, which represents land in all 50 states, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean Area. These watersheds represent more than 64,500 of the nation's potentially eligible farms and ranches, covering nearly 24 million acres of cropland and grazing land.

The funding announced was made possible through a supplemental appropriations bill provided by Congress on May 25, 2007.

USDA offers CSP in new watersheds annually on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. For more information about CSP, including a map of targeted watersheds and eligibility requirements, please visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship on private agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of the nation's natural resources. Under this program, USDA rewards producers who practice good stewardship on agricultural lands and offers incentives to increase the use of conservation practices. The USDA Farm Bill proposal calls for substantial reform and improvement of the Conservation Security Program with a goal of conducting nationwide signups in the future.

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