

Key Points

May 2004

Conservation Security Program

Watershed Selection

- CSP recognizes the contributions of the best land stewards and encourages them to do more. The program is based on conservation accomplishments. It is not an alternative way to provide income to producers.
- Landowners across the nation will have an opportunity to apply as subsequent watersheds are selected.
 - USDA is committed to the vision of CSP as a nationwide conservation program: however, only operators in the 18 selected watersheds can apply this year.
 - While there are outstanding producers in many watersheds, we had to make some tough choices to allocate the available financial resources.
- There were several criteria for selecting the watersheds to participate this year. The initial watersheds have:
 - A wide variety of land uses (crops, rangeland, pasture, vineyards/orchards) and input intensities.
 - High-priority resource issues to be addressed, including issues that meet their States priorities.
 - A history of good land stewardship on the part of landowners.
 - The availability of the technical tools necessary – such as digitized soils information – to streamline program implementation.
- Each participant will be chosen based on a self-assessment of their agricultural operation. The workbook for the self-assessment will be available soon on the web and at local USDA Service Centers.
- Other landowners can act now to make their operations more competitive for later sign-ups. Steps include – doing the self assessment, developing a conservation plan, and implementing the appropriate conservation measures.
- There are government programs and private assistance available to help defray the costs of conservation activities.
 - Watersheds are nature's boundaries. They are a common sense way to group together producers working in related environmental areas.
 - Implementing CSP on a watershed basis allows us to measure environmental success in a way that State or county lines couldn't be expected to do.
 - Since everyone lives in a watershed, as we rotate through the nation's watersheds every farmer and rancher will get a chance to participate. No producer will be left out.
 - The watershed approach will allow our staff and private technical service providers to more thoroughly assist

landowners who apply during the initial CSP sign-up.

- We can also help landowners in other watersheds assess their resources and prepare for future participation in the program.
- More information is available on the NRCS web site

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp> on the programs tab. This site includes the following program information and more:

CSP Fact Sheet
CSP Key Points
CSP Qs and As
CSP Enrollment Categories
Watershed Approach Key Points
Watershed Approach Qs and As

For More Information

If you need more information about CSP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

Note: This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.