

## ***At a Glance:*** **Conservation Stewardship Program**

December 2008

### ***Overview***

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by:

- Undertaking additional conservation activities; and
- Improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

CStP is available on Tribal and private agricultural lands in all 50 States and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands Areas. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced, or geographic location.

CStP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

### ***Legislative Changes***

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) replaces the Conservation Security Program with the new Conservation Stewardship Program for fiscal years 2009 through 2017.

To be eligible to participate in CStP, applicants must:

- Demonstrate that they are meeting the stewardship threshold for at least one resource concern; and
- Address at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the conservation stewardship contract.

The program will enroll an additional 12,769,000 acres for each fiscal year. Acreage will be allocated based primarily on each State's or Area's proportion of eligible acres to the total number of all eligible acres.

In addition to private agricultural lands, up to 10 percent of the enrolled acreage may be in nonindustrial private forest land.

State Conservationists and Area Directors will rank and select applications based on national, State, and local criteria. Contracts will cover the entire agricultural operation and will be for 5 years.

CStP payments will compensate producers for:

- Installing and adopting additional conservation activities;
- Improving, maintaining, and managing conservation activities in place a the time the contract offer is accepted by the Secretary;
- Adopting resource-conserving crop rotations to achieve beneficial crop rotations;
- Engaging in activities related to on-farm conservation research and demonstration activities, and pilot testing of new technologies or innovative conservation practices.

CStP payments to an individual or legal entity may not exceed \$200,000 for all contracts entered into during any 5-year period.

The 2008 Farm Bill prohibits new contracts under the Conservation Security Program (as authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill) after September 30, 2008, and provides for funding for all current contracts.

### ***More Information***

For more information and updates about CStP and other Farm Bill topics, please refer to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web site <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>.

