

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Dave White today announced that the cut-off date for the current Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) ranking period has been extended to Jan. 27, 2012.

Producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship are eligible for CSP payments.

“We want to make sure that people who want to be considered for CSP during this first ranking period have the time they need to complete their applications,” White said. “CSP is a very popular program and I encourage interested producers to apply at their local NRCS office as soon as they can.”

CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations by providing financial incentives.

It has been a successful program in Nebraska. In the last two years, over 1,600 contracts in 91 counties have been enrolled into CSP.

CSP is available statewide. The program provides many conservation benefits including improving water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancement and adopting conservation practices that address the effects of climate change.

Producers are encouraged to apply for CSP at their local NRCS office. The program, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship.

Eligible land includes cropland, grassland, prairie, improved pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe. Additional assistance is available to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

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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 and at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp>.