

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is the first USDA Farm Bill program to reward farmers who have adopted good conservation practices, and it provides substantial incentives to expand current conservation efforts. Consequently, producers with on-going, documented stewardship activities will be in a better position to reap the benefits of the program when it is offered in their watershed. The importance of record keeping cannot be overstressed. Farmers who received CSP payments in 2004 and 2005 had good records of manure, nutrient, and pest management practices.

CSP is to reward producers who are responsibly managing the acres they actively farm/graze, along with maintaining incidental areas that enhance this conservation. Lands eligible for payment are: hayland, crop, pasture, and incidental wildlife areas adjoining agland.

When the CSP comes to a watershed in Henry County, there will be a limited time to enroll. Learn about the program in advance and keep your records updated so you will be ready to enroll when the time comes. The CSP process, in a nutshell: Attend producers' meeting, organize information and fill in paperwork, submit information to NRCS and set up an interview time with NRCS to review application and ranking, then wait to hear whether your application was accepted for a contract.

Producers can improve their chances for a successful CSP application if they focus on activities that protect soil and water quality. In addition, improving wildlife habitat and air quality, conserving energy, and addressing related natural resource concerns, are important program goals. Many of these concerns can be addressed in a conservation plan. Think comprehensively. The CSP rewards producers who are broadly addressing many different resource concerns.

For more information about CSP and other conservation programs, contact your local NRCS office or visit our web site at www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov.