



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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*70 Years*  
*"A Partner in Conservation Since 1935"*

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March 25, 2005

Dear Farm Operator,

### **CSP Sign Up Dates Have Been Announced**

The final rule for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and sign up period for 2005 was announced by USDA Secretary Mike Johanns last week in Washington DC. **The sign up will be held March 28 through May 27** for farmers located in the Sauk and Redeye Watersheds. The majority of your farm operation must be within one of these watersheds to apply.

CSP is a new conservation program that rewards farmers who have a history of implementing a high level of conservation on their cropland and pasture. CSP is only available to farmers who actively produce or share in the risk of producing crop or livestock. CSP has been structured to only consider the best stewards and model conservation farmers for CSP contracts.

Rigid eligibility criteria has been established. Producers will be required to provide documentation of crop rotation, tillage practices, fertilizer and manure application rates and timing, herbicide and pesticide history, managing sensitive waters and soils. Past soil and manure tests must be provided to prove that over application has not occurred.

If your CSP application is approved, annual payments will be made for a period of 5-10 years.

**Two public meetings will be held to provide payment rate information, discuss eligibility criteria, and distribute worksheets that are required to be filled out by the farmer. Meetings will be held April 4<sup>th</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:30 AM at the Long Prairie City Hall. City Hall is located on the west side of Highway 71 just north of the new Coborns grocery store.**

**Self assessment workbooks, worksheets and payment rate information will also be available here at the office beginning April 4<sup>th</sup>.** You will be required to define your farming operation by bringing in aerial photos showing the land that will be under your control for the length of the CSP contract.

After successfully completing the workbook and worksheets, you will need to schedule an office appointment and interview. Office staff will review your workbook and worksheets. Individual payment rates will be discussed during the interview. **Appointment interviews will take place beginning April 11<sup>th</sup>.**

Detailed information about CSP in Minnesota and certification worksheets can be found at:  
<http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html>.

Sincerely,

Jim Fritz  
District Conservationist