

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
February 08, 2018
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Assistance Available to Agricultural Producers through the Conservation Stewardship Program

Agricultural producers wanting to enhance current conservation efforts are encouraged to apply for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Through CSP, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps private landowners build their business while implementing conservation practices that help ensure the sustainability of their entire operation. NRCS plans to enroll up to 10 million acres in CSP in 2018.

While applications for CSP are accepted year round, applications must be received by March 2, 2018, to be considered for this funding period.

Through CSP, agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like nutrient and pest management, cover crops and tree plantings— all while maintaining active agriculture production on their land. CSP also encourages the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques such as precision agriculture applications, on-site carbon storage and planting for high carbon sequestration rate, and new soil amendments to improve water quality.

Some of these benefits of CSP include:

- Improved cattle gains per acre;
- Increased crop yields;
- Decreased inputs;
- Wildlife population improvements; and
- Better resilience to weather extremes.

NRCS recently made several updates to the program to help producers better evaluate their conservation options and the benefits to their operations and natural resources. New methods and software for evaluating applications help producers see up front why they are or are not meeting stewardship thresholds, and allow them to pick practices and enhancements that work for their conservation objectives. These tools also enable producers to see potential payment scenarios for conservation early in the process.

Producers interested in CSP are recommended to contact their [local USDA service center](#) or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted.



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue unveiled [Farmers.gov](#), the new interactive one-stop website for producers maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Farmers.gov is now live but will have multiple features added over the coming months to allow agricultural producers to make appointments with USDA offices, file forms, and apply for USDA programs. The website, gathers together the three agencies that comprise USDA's Farm Production and Conservation mission area: the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Risk Management Agency.

Farmers.gov is mobile device-friendly and can identify for farmers the most convenient USDA office locations. New functions will be added shortly, including an interactive calendar, farming success stories, an online appointment feature, digital forms, and a business data dashboard. Additionally, when the 2018 Farm Bill is signed into law, there will be plain language program descriptions and a tool to determine eligibility.



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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.