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EMAIL: patrick.barry@ny.usda.gov

USDA Announces Sign-Up Period for Updated Conservation Stewardship Program

Ithaca, N. Y., April 18, 2018 – The next deadline for [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#) applications to be considered for funding this year is May 10, 2019. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest up to \$700 million for new enrollments and contract extensions in fiscal year 2019. The 2018 Farm Bill made several changes to this critical conservation program, which helps agricultural producers take the conservation activities on their farm or ranch to the next level.

While applications are accepted throughout the year, interested producers should submit applications to their local NRCS office by May 10, 2019, to ensure their applications are considered for 2019 funding.

Changes to the Program

The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes NRCS to accept new CSP enrollments from now until 2023, and it makes some important improvements to the program. These updates include:

- NRCS now enrolls eligible, high ranking applications based on dollars rather than acres. For fiscal 2019, NRCS can spend up to \$700 million in the program nationally, which covers part of the cost for producers implementing new conservation activities and maintaining their existing activities.
 - Higher payment rates are now available for certain conservation activities, including cover crops and resource conserving crop rotations.
- CSP now provides specific support for organic and for transitioning to organic production activities

About the Program

CSP is offered in all 50 states and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP is for working lands including cropland, pastureland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

You may apply by visiting your local NRCS field office, which can be located using the web site: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=NY> or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted.