



**Natural Resources  
Conservation Service**

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# News Release

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## **USDA Announces Applications Available for Updated Conservation Stewardship Program** *Program changes offers opportunity for increased payments with easier to understand ranking and evaluation tools*

SALINA, Kansas, NOV. 30, 2016—Since November 14, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been accepting applications for enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Based on feedback from farmers, ranchers, and forestry landowners, CSP has been updated with more options to get increased payments based on new bundles of conservation practices. Also, new modeling tools have been created to show payment scenarios for various conservation practices early in the application process. Landowners still have time to submit their applications for the program.

NRCS is taking CSP applications until February 3, 2017. Information about CSP, including national and state ranking questions and enhancement descriptions, is available on the Web at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp). Applications and program information are available in local service centers.

With over 70 million acres enrolled, CSP is the nation’s largest conservation program. It pays agricultural producers and forest landowners for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, ecologically-based pest management, buffer strips, and pollinator and beneficial insect habitat—all while maintaining active agriculture production on their land.

According to Eric B. Banks, Kansas state conservationist, “This is a big deal. The CSP changes now offer greater rewards for producers who put more conservation practice on the ground.” And in speaking about the preparation for the program’s new features, Eric said, “Beside new software tools to run payment scenarios early in the application process, CSP has been redesigned to look more like other conservation programs that are familiar to farmers and ranchers. Plus, all new program information has been developed to view or download on the Web so that landowners can see all the options available for them.”

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For more information, visit the Kansas NRCS Web site [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs) or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, check on the Internet at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov). Follow us on Twitter @NRCS\_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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## **About the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

One of the worst dust storms in American history occurred on April 14, 1935, a day known as “Black Sunday.” After moving across Kansas, the dust cloud reached Washington, D.C. the next day. Congress took immediate action. President Roosevelt signed the bill creating the Soil Conservation Service on April 27, 1935. Now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we have a deeply held vision of a nation where the use of our natural resources is guided by a widely shared and heartfelt stewardship ethic.

Our approach starts with talking one-on-one with the landowner to understand their goals. We then apply science-based conservation practices to create a plan to fix problems such as soil health, grazing capacity, water and wind erosion, wildlife preservation, or wetland management. NRCS is here to help people help the land to sustain their livelihood now and for the future.